

GUY FORRESTER'S SECRET

By Florence Hodgkinson.

This Brilliant Emotional Story
begins to-day.

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"MARTHA! MARTHA!" SADIE CRIES, LOUDLY, AND RUSHES TO HER AUNT'S ROOM TO FIND THE BED IN FLAMES, AND GIPSY LYING CHARRED AND STIFF UPON THE HEARTH Rug.

Her Just Reward.

By the Author of "Phillipa's Father,"
"Princess Hildegard," "We Three
Girls," &c., &c.

[A NOVELETTE.]

COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.

CHAPTER I.

THE question is," says Mrs. Sieveking, "which of you girls will go?"
"Not I," cried Alice. "I should be moped to death."
"And you know you can't spare me, mother," says Bessie. "Who would give

the children their lessons? You had best send Dick."

"And frighten the poor old ladies to death!" laughs Alice. "No, that won't do. I guess Sadie must be the one."

The third girl looks up with a flash in her dark eyes.

"I thought that would be the suggestion. If ever there is anything disagreeable to do it always falls to my share. It isn't just."

"Well, you know, Sadie, dear, you have such a taking way with you (although your temper isn't as equable as it might be); and think how important a personage you will be as Miss Eleanor Sieveking's heiress!"

"I've no wish to figure as an heiress."

Mother, dear, say I need not go. There's no need for me to wait for dead men's shoes!"

Mrs. Sieveking looks anxious and puzzled.

"It would be foolish to refuse your aunt's offer. I declare I am often at a loss to know how to make both ends meet; and every year the children grow more expensive. They will soon be beyond Bessy's teaching. But I do not wish to force your inclinations, girls, so you must settle the matter between yourselves."

Sadie takes up the letter which has proved such a bone of contention, and reads aloud in an irate voice,—

"DEAR NIECE.—Knowing that your means must be very inadequate to support so large a family, and feeling myself the need of a

Next week: MOTHER OR DAUGHTER. Long Complete Story.

companion, I may say I am willing to take one of the girls off your hands entirely. And if she proves kind, attentive and lovable, she will not find herself unrewarded after my death. But she must be content to see no company, to devote her time to me entirely; in return for which sacrifice and service she will be regarded as my daughter might have been had I ever married. Let me have a reply by return, and I will then forward the necessary funds for travelling and other expenses.—Your affectionate aunt,

"ELEANOR SIEVEKING."

"Well," says Sadie, tossing aside the letter, "I see no reason why one of us should be sold into slavery. Write a refusal, mother!"

"And regret doing so all my life?" sadly, "You forget there is Dick to be placed, and Harry must soon attend the grammar school; whilst Mamie and Susie must soon go into training for governesses? I do think, girls, one of you might sacrifice her own inclination for the good of the rest."

Alice tosses her head, Bessie looks uncomfortable, and wishing to escape reproaches or entreaties, says,—

"Tell us what you know of our great aunts, mother, and let us decide what to do. We shall be better able if we have any idea of those 'high-and-mighty' characters."

"It is very little I know," Mrs. Sieveking says, sighing. "They were disappointed women long before I met your father. They had quarrelled about a lover, but I cannot give you any particulars, because when your father married me all intercourse between him and his aunts ceased. They thought our marriage most imprudent, and perhaps it was, for I was only sixteen, and had not a penny. Sometimes, when I look at you, Alice, I doubt if you can be my daughter. It seems ridiculous that a woman of thirty-seven should have a daughter of twenty!"

"You look like our elder sister," says Sadie, fondly. "But go on, mother, dear; we are interested in your peculiar relatives."

"Well, Eleanor is ten years older than Emma, and when old Mr. Sieveking died he left her sole guardian of her sister, with power to forbid her marriage until she attained her majority; and, according to all accounts, Miss Eleanor was most faithful in the discharge of her duty, most loving to her pretty young sister. She was herself engaged to a Mr. Deloraine, but she refused to marry until Emma should leave school, which she did at the age of seventeen. Then the preparations for her wedding went on merrily; the bridal dress was sent home, the day and the hour appointed for the ceremony, when Miss Eleanor discovered her lover was false to her, and that he and her sister meditated a hasty flight and secret marriage. They say she was like a mad-woman at first; but when the shock of her discovery was somewhat softened she called them both into her presence, and, reminding them of her guardianship, said,— 'Without my consent you cannot marry, and I will not grant it. That shall be my revenge. In four years, Arthur Deloraine will forget you, Emma Sieveking, as he has forgotten and deceived the woman who has loved him faithfully for six long years.' She was right. In less than fifteen months he married, and for his sake both ladies have remained single. That is all I know."

"I am quite sorry for Aunt Eleanor," says Sadie, thoughtfully. "All my sympathies are with her. Emma was a mean sneak."

"Sadie! what dreadful language!" cries Alice.

"I don't care. I like to be forcible now

and then. There, mother, don't look so worried. We will think things over to-day, and to-morrow you shall write to Miss Sieveking, and promise her one of your troublesome girls;" and, kissing the lady gently, she goes out and up to her room, whilst Alice and Bessy exchange glances, knowing well what will be the result of Sadie's voluntary exile.

All through the long, bright afternoon Sadie sits by her window, her young face clouded and anxious, her sweet eyes full of vague trouble. She knows, and has known from the beginning, that she will be the one sent out from the parent nest. Not that Mrs. Sieveking loves her less than her other children, but they have all got into the way of putting disagreeable tasks upon her, of making her young shoulders bear the brunt of misfortune and care.

"Sadie is so unselfish," says the mother, self-excessingly.

"Oh! She has a natural talent for finding a way out of a difficulty," lovely, lazy Alice adds, whilst Bessie, laughing lightly, remarks, "Sadie is never happy but when she is miserable!"

Perhaps the girl is recalling these careless speeches, as she sits there unconsciously drinking in deep draughts of the frosty February air, for the exquisite little face grows sadder yet, but the line of the lips is resolute, and in the dark eyes is a look which means "self-abnegation."

It will be hard to leave them all—dear old Dick (her senior by a year, and her most loyal servant), and the children too. Who will braid Mamie's luxuriant yellow hair when she is gone, or mend those awful rents Susie is always making in her frocks? Who will help handsome, indolent Harry with his Latin exercises, or surreptitiously finish his maps? And then, her mother! The darling mother, who has never given her a harsh word in all the seventeen years of her life. Down goes the brown head, and for a little while the sweet dark face is hidden on her arms, but soon Sadie looks up and shakes herself angrily.

"What a baby I am," she says, aloud, "and a selfish little wretch! Didn't I promise father three years ago always to be a help and comfort to mother? It strikes me I've been in great danger of forgetting my bond," and suddenly she rises, smooths the curly dark hair, readjusts her spotless collar and cuffs, and when the tea-bell rings is quite ready to go down with a calm face and eyes that smile, despite the aching heart.

Mrs. Sieveking glances anxiously and deprecatingly at her, but says nothing, only Sadie notices that the choicest morsel of cake, the thinnest bread-and-butter finds its way to her plate, and it costs her a great effort to keep down her tears. The meal is almost ended when she says quite quietly and bravely,—

"Mother, you may write and tell aunt Eleanor I am ready to go to Thoribury when she pleases!"

"Oh, my dear! how I shall miss you, Sadie. I wish there were no need for you to go!" and the mother bursts into tears.

"What a darling you are!" cries Alice; "and I daresay you will have a very good time of it."

"Yes, and you can be spared better than I can," says Bessy, complacently. "You see you have no capacity for teaching."

But fourteen-year-old Mamie pauses in her attack on the bread-and-butter, and with wide eyes asks,—

"What on earth are you talking about? Where is Sadie going, and for how long?"

"I am going to live with our great-aunt, Miss Eleanor Sieveking," Sadie says, bravely, "and I will send you some pretty things home—"

"I don't want them! I don't want them!" howls Mamie, flinging herself on Sadie's neck. "I only want you! Why can't Alice go? I'm sure she's no use! She only thinks of her new gowns and her sweethearts—"

"You little wretch, how dare you talk so?" demands Alice, angrily. "Really, Mamie, you are unbearable; and Sadie likes going."

"I don't believe it," says Susie, with an angry flash in her blue eyes; "she never would leave us willingly! Oh, mamma, dear, she must not go!"

"There's no help for it," Sadie says philosophically, although a queer lump rises to her throat, "and I daresay I shall be comfortable; if not, I promise you all I'll come back very quickly. There, you children, don't cry, you bother mother."

"Oh, what will Harry say—and Dick too?" questions Mamie, hanging about that little figure with a sort of elephantine fondness; "I'll tease them not to let you go."

"Now, Mamie, be sensible. It is for Sadie's good she should go."

"Yes, Alice is right," with a queer little laugh, "and remember, I shall be very angry if you say anything to Harry, or write to Dick before all my plans are settled. Now let us be quiet a short while, and then I will tell you some nice fairy stories."

So she puts aside all discussion, and later on sees her mother write an acceptance of Miss Eleanor's offer, and does not show any sign of emotion, but her heart is aching—aching sorely.

And through all that busy week which follow, she helps with skilful hands to get her things in readiness; and only at night, when Mamie is fast asleep, does she give vent to the great sorrow weighing her down.

At last the eventful morning comes, and even Sadie cannot repress her tears. Never before has she been parted from her dear ones, and with a little bitter cry she throws her arms about her mother's neck sobbing, "Don't forget me, dear; don't let them teach you to forget me!" and when Harry, kissing her, declares it "is a thundering shame," and breaks down ignominiously, she rushes out of the little hall and springs into the hired fly, fearful lest after all, her courage and resolution should give way.

Alice has given her her favourite cameo brooch; Bessie has presented her with some of the lace she is so clever at making; each and all have given of their little store of treasures, but Sadie cannot think of these things now; she is almost heartbroken, and the way looks very dark before her.

It is quite late in the day when she reaches Thoribury, where a neat, elderly servant meets her.

"I've got a cab waiting for you, miss," she says respectfully. "The ladies don't keep a carriage any longer, because, you see, they seldom or never go out. I'm afraid you'll find it dull."

"I'm afraid I shall," ruefully; "we are such a large and noisy family at Saxtown. I suppose my aunts leads very secluded lives?"

"They just do, miss. Miss Eleanor has the upper part of the house, and I wait on her and Gipsy (that's her dog), and a fine job it is, too. Then Miss Emma has the lower part, and Carry (the housemaid) waits on her and Judy, the cat; and they take their meals separate too. Oh, they're a queer couple, but of the two I like my missus the best. She's more generous, and I reckon Miss Emma wasn't always fair to her. But I'm main sorry for you, my dear-miss, I mean. It's a dull place for a wee bit of a thing like you," and something like tears glistened in the faded eyes.

Sadie puts out one small hand impulsively.

"Thank you for your kindly words; and now tell me what I am to call you?"

"Martha, Miss; and I'm sure I hope you'll be happy; but I doubt it."

CHAPTER II.

"So you are Cyril Sieveking's child?" says Miss Eleanor, leaning forward on her sick, and peering with dim eyes into the dark, sweet face. "Come a little nearer, and let me look at you well. Ah! yes, yes! you're like your father; just the same dark eyes and spirited mouth. Take care you don't spoil your life as he did his. He was hardly twenty when he married, and, of course, he was a poor man all his life. Marriage is all a failure."

Poor old maid! She had not always thought it so! And as Sadie's look rests on the wrinkled face, the hollow, sunken eyes, a great pity fills her heart. This woman, so lonely, so wretched, with no friend but her dog, had once been fair and well-beloved. Why, even she—Sadie—might come to such a pass as the years wore by. She stoops forward.

"Aunt Eleanor," she says, gently, "my parents were very happy! and—and I hope I shall be able to make you happy too."

"Humph!" says Miss Eleanor. "You're wise in your generation, my dear. I have a very pretty fortune to leave behind!"

The dark face flashes indignantly.

"You may leave it to whom you please, aunt," she says, unsteadily. "It has not made you very happy, and I do not covet it!"

"Don't be insolent, child! I am accustomed only to respect, but I won't quarrel with you on the first night of your arrival. Martha, take Miss Sadie to Miss Emma's room; we must not neglect her," sneeringly, and so the girl is led downstairs into an elegant room, where sits an old lady, smaller, prettier than Aunt Eleanor, but with a less trust-inspiring face, and an air of discontent, which saddens Sadie.

She looks up as the two enter.

"How many times am I to forbid you to intrude upon my privacy, Martha? Why did you not send Carry with my niece?"

"I only obeyed orders, miss," Martha says, defiantly. "I can't afford to go against my mistress. I guess she's my best friend."

"You can go!" with a flash of anger in the blue eyes. "You are an impertinent woman!" and, as the door closes upon the muttering servant, she says to Sadie, "Eleanor has no control over her maid. Carry never thinks of replying to me. I would not allow it. Dear me, Saditha, how dark you are! quite as brown as a berry, and for a girl with no money, that is unfortunate. Most men admire blondes!" and she glances at herself in the opposite mirror with such evident vanity that Sadie is both amused and pitiful.

She is sixty, but there is hardly a grey thread visible in the still luxuriant hair, and her complexion, once a marvel of nature, is now a marvel of art.

"Oh! my dear, I can assure you I had many lovers—so many I am afraid to tell you their number; and, but for Eleanor, I should have been a happy wife years and years ago. Not that I am so very old now. But, you see, she wanted Arthur Deloraine herself, and she made mischief between us. We have never been on friendly terms since, although it suits us to live together. It prevents scandal, saves the expense of two establishments, and Eleanor is very mean. And as for temper!—well, she has the oddest in the world!"

"She seems kind," Sadie ventures, timidly.

"Kind! eh! that's her way. No one

knows what a hypocrite she is so well as I; and she is so dreadfully unforgiving. That is a bad feature in her character. And she so old, too, that any day may be her last. Why, Saditha, she is seventy!"

The girl can hardly repress a smile as she says,—

"Indeed, Aunt Emma! She scarcely looks it!"

"But it is true, nevertheless; and I always think she is very antiquated for her age. I'm sure I don't know why she has sent for you here, and I'm quite certain you won't be comfortable. It isn't in Eleanor's nature to allow that. But if you care to visit me now and then, you may, although I confess I have a prejudice against dark women; they are so invariably deceitful. But I don't suppose you can help your complexion. Just lay Judy comfortably in her basket—so! and put that saucer of milk so that she can reach it easily, and then—well, then, really, Saditha, we will say good-bye for the present. That is Eleanor's gong going now. She has got mutton cutlets, I know, so I have ordered steak. We always fly to opposite angles in everything."

So Sadie goes out, and up to Miss Eleanor's room. What an unhappy house she has come to, and how glad she is to leave Aunt Emma! What could Arthur Deloraine have seen in her to wean his heart from her sister, on whose old and furrowed face there yet lives the impress of a great sorrow and a great wrong?

Miss Eleanor welcomes her with the words,—

"What an unconscionable time you have stayed! Emma must have been in one of her happy moods. What do you think of her?"

Sadie falls on her knees, so that her young face is on a level with the old woman's.

"What do I think? Oh! dear aunt, I think how much happier you would both be if you would only forget and forgive!"

With strength wonderful in one so old Miss Eleanor thrusts her away.

"How dare you talk to me of forgetting and forgiving when she ruined all my life, made me old before my time, bitter and unlovely? There! there! I have frightened you, but I will say no more. Sit down, and enjoy your dinner if you can."

With a sad heart the girl takes her place, and for a short time the knives and forks are piled in silence; then Miss Eleanor says,—

"How many do you count in family?"

"Seven," Sadie answers, looking up brightly. "There is Alice (our beauty), she is twenty; Bessy a year younger, and Dick is eighteen. Then I come; after that we rest two years, for Harry is only fifteen; the two youngest are Mamie and Susie, aged respectively fourteen and twelve."

"And what does your mother intend doing with you all?"

"That is the puzzle," half laughing; "but Alice is so lovely she is sure to marry well; and Bessy, who is very clever, is engaged to a barrister."

"And you?" asks Miss Eleanor, with an air of interest.

"Oh," naively, "I am provided for so long as I please you; but indeed, aunt, I would rather work for hire, because I could help then to place Dick out, and—"

"And you had best get on with your dinner," says her aunt in a not unkindly tone. "We will talk of these things to-morrow."

Miserably homesick, Sadie goes to her room, and, despite her sorrow, is so tired that she soon falls into a heavy sleep, from which she is awakened by the tinkling of a bell above her head. Afraid of what she scarcely knows she springs up, and runs to Miss Eleanor's room, barefooted, and with

her dark hair streaming about her shoulders, down to her waist.

"What is it, aunt? Are you ill?" she questions anxiously.

"Ill; no," comes the answer, in a sharp tone. "I never am, but Gipsy's bed is not comfortable. Please arrange it for her."

Just a moment Sadie stands mutinous and angry, then the thought of the dear ones at home conquers her; and, kneeling down, she rearranges the hideous pug's basket, and covers it up as warmly as though it were a human creature.

"May I go now, aunt?" she asks shivering, and scarce able to keep her eyes open. "I think the dog is comfortable."

"Oh yes, you may go. But what a hurry you are in! Young people are always selfish, and you are no exception to the rule."

So Sadie creeps miserably back to bed, and is just falling into a delicious doze when that hateful bell tinkles again. Once more she repairs to her aunt's room, this time wrapping a shawl about her shoulders.

"You rang, aunt?" she says, interrogatively, and Miss Eleanor makes answer,—

"Yes, but for pity's sake, come in! Don't stand there letting the draught in."

Sadie closes the door, and advances a little towards the fire.

"Will you tell me what you want, please, so that I may get it, and go to bed; I am tired after my journey."

"You need not rise very early in the morning, and I shall not keep you a moment. Gipsy is thirsty. Will you go down and get her a saucer of water?"

Almost ready to cry, the poor child rushes downstairs, meeting Carry on the landing. The girl gives one swift glance at the dusky, weary face, then says,—

"Miss Sadie, what is it you want? Can I get it for you?"

"Will you? I am afraid to go down to the kitchen; but—but I want some water for that wretched little dog."

Carry laughs.

"I'm on much the same errand myself, miss. The cat is hungry, and I am going to mix her some bread and milk, but I'll bring what you want first. I reckon you're tired."

"Tired! I am so weary I could almost cry," but she gives the girl her saucer, and waits shivering for her return. Carry does not keep her long.

"Here you are, miss," she says, in the friendliest tone. "Now you just get to bed as soon as you can: it's a bitter night, and you'll be taking cold."

Upstairs goes Sadie, and having placed the water within Gipsy's reach, turns to go; when Miss Eleanor, lying comfortably in bed, says,—

"How your teeth chatter, child! Why did you not put on a dressing-gown?"

"I haven't one," answers Sadie, who has no false pride. "We should think such a garment a luxury at home, and we have only money for necessities, there are so many of us."

"Humph! Well, Martha can take you to my dressmaker to-morrow, and you may order two, but let them be pretty and bright. I hate to see young girls dowdily dressed. Now go to bed. You look as tired as though you had done a hard day's work. The rising generation have no constitutions to speak of. Good-night, Saditha."

Wearily the girl creeps back to her room, and this time she is allowed to rest; and when the faint light of a February day enters the room she is aroused by Martha, who carries a cup of tea and a plate of toast,—

"I thought, maybe," says the woman, "you'd want something to take before you got up. I heard Miss Eleanor's bell go in

the night, and I know she'd keep you 'dinking' up and down till she was tired. She ain't a bad sort, miss, but she's awful queer in her ways."

Sadie sits up, her cheeks flushed, and her eyes still sleepy.

"You are very kind to me, Martha. I don't know how much to thank you—and, oh! what a lovely cup of tea!"

The maid looked pleased.

"Oh, I'll do anything I can to make you comfortable, miss; and, while I am here, let me tell you not to give in too much to Miss Eleanor. She's worth a score of women like her sister, but she'll not respect or spare you if you humour all her whims. Poor lady! she ain't had too easy a life, and I'm main sorry for her. There goes her bell, and I mustn't keep her waiting;" with which words Martha hurries from the room, leaving Sadie to discuss her tea and toast.

Later in the morning she is summoned to Miss Eleanor's room.

"My dear," says the lady, "I hope you have breakfasted. I always take the first meal of the day alone, and then I am ready for the duties and pleasures of the remaining hours, although I must say the pleasures are few. Now I want you to read to me. Then there are several letters to write—I hate that sort of thing. Next, you must wash Gipsy, and be sure she is well rubbed and dried—she takes cold so easily. And when you have done that you may go with Martha to the dressmaker's—that won't occupy much time—and afterwards you can take Gipsy walking. You must not let her run loose, poor dear; she isn't strong, and the day is damp. She shall wear her blue coat, and you will carry her."

Sadie's face flushed crimson.

She has always inveighed so strongly against lap-dogs, and the foolish women who treat them with more goodness than they would bestow on a suffering child. Now she says,—

"Do you mean, Aunt Eleanor, it is my duty to play nurse to that horrid little wretch?"

Poor Sadie! She never could hide her feelings. She was always hasty, and now she reaps the harvest of her impulsiveness.

"Of course," says Miss Eleanor, "you may please yourself, Sadie; but if you refuse to wait upon Gipsy you must go home. I regard her as a human being, and she has one merit that men and women have not—she is faithful. Now bring 'Keats' here and read me 'Endymion.'"

CHAPTER III.

SADIE walks disgustedly along in the bleak March morning, carrying Gipsy, resplendent in a blue coat, trimmed with yellow ribbon.

Between her and the girl there is a rooted antipathy, which the pug shows by snapping and snarling on every possible occasion, thus bringing down Miss Eleanor's wrath on the luckless Sadie.

But for the thought that she is helping the dear mother at home she would never endure life at Thorbury.

But a very brave, unselfish little heart beats in that small body, and so she endures in silence, and writes cheerful letters to Mrs. Sieveking and the girls, who little guess all she is suffering for their sakes.

The wind plays mad pranks with her dress and bos, blows the brown hair about the dainty face and into the browner eyes; and in her struggles to rearrange the troublesome curls she is frequently compelled to move Gipsy from one arm to the other, a proceeding which seems distaste-

ful to her, for now and again she gives vent to sundry growls and snarls.

"Be quiet!" Sadie says, angrily, under her breath, and shakes her vigorously, to her own hurt.

With a savage growl the pug jerks herself erect, and fixes its sharp white teeth in the girl's arm.

"Oh!" cries Sadie, and drops her burden. "Oh!" and for a moment the pain makes her feel faint; then, when she looks round, she sees Gipsy scampering off in the homeward direction, and a gentleman pursuing her. She stands quite still in the middle of the street, almost ready to cry with vexation and the smart of her wound, and in a short time her new friend joins her, carrying Gipsy by the nape of the neck. He is a pleasant, stalwart looking young man, and a smile, half-humorous, half-mocking, plays about his mouth as he gives his burthen into Sadie's arms.

"Why do you make yourself ridiculous carrying this little wretch?" he asks with the greatest coolness. "Really you look too sensible to commit such folly!"

The colour flushes into her face, and tears of mortification rise to her eyes.

"I know I look ridiculous," she says, unsteadily, "but I cannot help myself. It is part of my duty to wait upon this horrid dog; and now she has bitten me for my pains!"

His half-amused, half-contemptuous look changes to one of compassion.

"Is it a serious wound? Will you let me see it?"

For answer she rolls back the sleeve of her jacket, and shows five bleeding wounds.

"Oh, I'm sorry! You must forgive my rude greeting, and let me take you to a chemist, if there is one in this benighted place! He will know what to do for you."

"Oh, it is nothing!" Sadie answers, flushing again, "and I must really hurry home. My aunt will be anxious about—her dog!"

"So you live with an aunt? Well, she must be a pleasant sort of a person to consider this ugly beast first; and with your permission I shall take you to a chemist or doctor. Who lives nearest?"

The kindly voice is very authoritative, the frank, grey eyes have a look which compels obedience, and, with a shy little laugh, Sadie says,—

"Thank you for your kindness to me; and if I must submit, I will go to Mr. Dawson. He is a chemist, and lives hardly a stone's throw from here!"

Her companion turns with her, and reaching the shop, says in the most matter-of-fact way,—

"I will wait for you. Probably, as I am a stranger here, you will be kind enough to direct me to the house I want."

"I shall be happy," she answers, demurely, and passes in.

When her wounds have been duly attended, and Gipsy adjusted nicely upon her arms by the sympathetic chemist, she reappears.

"Aren't you tired of waiting? I have been a long while."

"Not so very long, and I assumed myself in examining the carving of that place opposite. It must be very old."

"It is the bank, and is supposed to have been built in the sixteenth century. Where do you wish to go, please?"

"To Delaware Lodge!"

"Oh! I am afraid your visit will be fruitless! My aunts receive no visitors but the clergyman and doctor!"

"Then the Misses Sieveking are your aunts? How jolly! You will be able to introduce me. It would be so awkward to address them in this fashion: 'I am Oluf Deloraine, and was commissioned two years ago (by my father) to visit them if ever I came near Thorbury.'"

"Mr. Deloraine!" says Sadie, in an awe-struck tone. "Oh, I think if I were you I would not venture to call upon them."

"You know the story, then? But it was my father's dying wish that I should convey his regrets to the sisters for the part he acted towards them; and surely the women who once loved him will not cherish evil thoughts of the dead?"

"No," dubiously; "but he did act badly to them. If you ever see them you will know that two lives were utterly spoiled by him, and the love that existed between them turned to hate!"

He flushes uncomfortably.

"I have guessed so much! It is a hard thing for me to say, but in nothing was my father stable! That was his one grievous fault!"

"I wonder, then, that he kept faith so long with Aunt Eleanor."

"So do I; but you see they met constantly. He had no chance of forgetting her; and by his account, I imagine she was a woman of strong mind and great powers of fascination."

"I cannot imagine how he should prefer Aunt Emma!" the girl said, thoughtfully.

"Of course, I know she must have been very pretty in her youth, but she is so shallow and heartless! I think Mr. Deloraine was fortunate in not marrying her. Was your mother very lovely, that she won him from her?"

"My father married twice; his second wife was my mother, and I was his only child. Are you, too, an orphan?"

"No, mamma is alive, and lives at Saxtown with my sisters and brothers. We are quite a big family. Mr. Deloraine, this is Delaware Lodge; but I think you had best not come in now; wait till evening; Aunt Eleanor is always nicer-tempered then, and I can prepare her for your visit."

He looks a little disappointed, but says,—

"Of course you know best, Miss—Miss—"

"I am Sadie Sieveking!"

"Thank you. I suppose, then, I must leave you? You cannot spare time to show me the lions of the town?"

"There are none, and even if there were I dare stay out no longer. I am afraid that when aunt learns the very informal manner in which we introduced ourselves each to the other she will be angry."

"Tell her to visit her anger upon me; I am the only offender. Shall I see you this evening? I shall want some support."

"You may, perhaps; but don't rely upon me for help. I am a very cowardly body, and Aunt Eleanor is terrible sometimes. But if she receives you graciously I can promise you much amusement and some sorrow. In all the long years which have elapsed since the rapture between your father and Miss Sieveking my aunts have lived apart, though in the same house. Since your father's first marriage neither has seen the other."

"How awful! Great heavens, to think one man could work such bitter sorrow and discord. But for my promise to my father I should leave Thorbury without seeing the poor ladies."

"I don't know," Sadie says, thoughtfully. "Perhaps it may be good for them to meet you. I should be glad if a reconciliation could be effected. And now good-bye, Mr."

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Deloraine, and thank you for your kindness to me."

Then she is gone; and in a thoughtful mood Oluf Deloraine strolls towards the one hotel the place boasts.

"Poor little girl!" he says to himself. "What on earth are her people about to condemn her to such a life! To bury such brightness in such a hole! What a pretty, candid child she is; brown as a berry, and fresh as a rose! She ought to make some man's life happy. I shall like to see her again, but I'm blest if I care about this evening's enterprise. I wish it were over."

In the meanwhile Sadie makes her way to Miss Eleanor's boudoir.

"You are late!" says that lady, who is in what Martha terms a fractious mood. "You had no right to keep Gipsy out such an extraordinary time!"

"But for her I should have been home long ago, aunt. She bit my arm, and when I dropped her, ran away from me, and I think she would have been lost but a gentleman caught and restored her to me. Then I went to Dawson's to have my arm dressed."

"She would not have bitten you had you not provoked her," retorts the old lady. "She is never spiteful. Here, take her into the bathroom and wash her. She is positively dirty!"

Sadie stands motionless, and although the tears are in her eyes she will not let them fall.

"You are unkind and unreasonable, aunt," she says, unsteadily, "and I refuse to obey you. I will never make myself ridiculous again by carrying her out, and I will not wash her!"

"Very well, miss. You can go to your room and pack your boxes; and understand, not one penny of my money shall ever come to you!"

"I did not expect it, aunt. I have not served you in that hope. When do you wish me to go?"

"To-day by the three train. You'll be sorry for your conduct soon."

Without replying, Sadie goes to her own room, and begins to pack, carefully leaving out any gift of Miss Eleanor's; and having completed her preparations sits down by her window, wondering what they will say at home, how they will take her dismissal. Presently Martha appears.

"If you please, Miss Sadie, your aunt wants you at once."

"Very well, say I am coming," and she followed the maid slowly.

Miss Eleanor does not look at her as she enters, but says in a dull voice,—

"You were very rude to me and I was a trifle hasty; but there is no reason why we should part. I have sent for you to say so!"

"For my mother's sake I should be glad to stay," Sadie says, gravely and quietly; "but I owe myself some respect, and if I agree to remain with you it must be on condition that I am free of all attendance upon Gipsy."

"I have made every arrangement for her comfort with Martha; but you will, of course, attend me at night. Sit down!" A little later she asks, "Is your arm very painful, child? Don't you think you had best see Dr. Potter?"

"Oh, it does not hurt so much now, thank you, aunt; and, indeed, it is not necessary to call in a doctor. I shall do very well." Then she adds nervously, "Aunt Eleanor, I am going to surprise you; but I hope you will not be angry. The gentleman who caught Gipsy was Mr. Oluf Deloraine, and he was on his way to visit you, but I persuaded him to postpone his call until this evening."

As she lifts her eyes to her aunt's face she sees it suddenly change, and a great

wave of pallor sweep over it; but in a moment the old lady controls herself sufficiently to ask,—

"What does he want with me? I do not know him."

"His father wished him to visit you if he should ever be in this neighbourhood, and he could not respect a dying command."

"Is Arthur Deloraine dead?" she asks, in a low, intense tone.

"Two years since!"

"I—I will see him, and, Sadie, go and prepare Emma for his coming. She would wish to meet him, too."

"You will let me bring her here, aunt?"

"No, no; that shall never be. She ruined all my life, and made me what I am. But if Oluf Deloraine cares to meet her, let him. I shall raise no objection."

She is calm to the last, but as Sadie goes from the room she hears the quavering voice cry wildly, "Dead! dead! Gone before me. Oh, would that I, too, lay dead. I am all alone and friendless!"

CHAPTER IV.

"AND you are Arthur Deloraine's son," says Miss Eleanor, rising slowly to greet the young man. "I am curious to hear how it chanced that your father remembered me after so many years. Men are so proverbially faithless and forgetful."

"Not all men; but that my father wronged you sorely he admitted when on his death bed, and bade me convey his sorrow for his sin to you, should time and opportunity occur. I heard the whole story then, and I do not suppose for a minute you can regard me with anything but suspicion and dislike."

"Now you are travelling too fast," says the old lady, sharply. "I am a queer woman, and it would take a cleverer man than you to guess my likes and dislikes. You are not at all like your father."

"No," with a smile over her abruptness.

"I am a real Cardwell. My mother was a Cardwell, as perhaps you did not know."

"I knew nothing about her. Now take me in to dinner. Oh! I will take no refusal. Of course, I expected you would stay, and you need not trouble about your dress; I have no other guests."

The young man has no alternative, so submitting with a good grace, he leads the old lady into the handsome dining-room, Sadie following with down-dropped eyes.

"Does not Miss Emma favour us with her company?"

His hostess frowns, but answers quietly,

"My sister's apartments are below; when we have dined Sadie will take you down to her."

"Is she an invalid that she cannot appear?" this pertinacious young man asks, coolly; and, after a moment's pause, Miss Eleanor answers still temperately,—

"No, nothing of the sort; only each of us prefers her own society, so we keep up two separate establishments."

"Isn't that inconvenient, unsociable, and unsisterly?" calmly.

"Perhaps so," responds the old maid; "but not all the talking in the world will alter our arrangements. Mr. Deloraine, dinner waits!"

All through the meal Sadie is very quiet, and the brown eyes look very wistful. Oluf guesses she has been having a rough time since they parted, and tries fruitlessly to draw her into conversation. She will answer only in monosyllables, and when the cloth is removed, she rises, saying,—

"I will go and prepare Aunt Emma for your visit."

"Thank you. Shall I not go with you, rather? I do not care to discuss the wine alone!" and as he rises, with the evident

intention of accompanying her, Miss Sieveking makes no remonstrance.

"This is an awfully dull life for you," he says, as they go downstairs together. "I wonder that you endure it so stoically!"

"Oh!" she answers, with a sigh that is half a sob, "sometimes I feel I must run away. I feel so starved of love and sympathy, for though we are quite poor at home we are always very happy together. But you must not think Aunt Eleanor is unkind to me; she is very good in a curious way, and if she would let me I should soon grow fond of her. Mr. Deloraine, this is Aunt Emma's room. I will introduce you, and then hurry back again to our own apartments. You will find your way up to us."

The next moment he is being presented to Miss Emma, who in honour of the occasion is wearing an absurdly juvenile cap, trimmed with pale pink ribbons, a handsome bronze-green silk, and costly lace collar.

"I am pleased to see you, for your father's sake," she says, and real tears stand in her faded eyes, as she thinks of her girlhood's lover. The news of his death was a terrible shock to her. "You see, Eleanor is too old to feel any poignant grief! Sadie, you may go."

Then, as the door closes upon her niece, she asks, with a trace of coquetry, which had long ago been her distinguishing characteristic,—

"Do you think Sadie pretty? What is your opinion as a man of the world?"

"Miss Sieveking is undoubtedly attractive!" quietly.

"Yes, her features are rather nice, but her complexion is dreadful! Why, she is as 'brown as a berry,' although how that saying originated is more than I can tell, because berries are mostly red."

"She is deliciously dark," says Oluf calmly, "And aren't we told that nut-brown maids are tender and true? I fancy I've read something to that effect."

"Well, suppose we talk of yourself," says Miss Emma, with a toss of her blonde head. "I am sure the subject will be interesting!"

This is the beginning of a series of visits to Delaware Lodge, and although Miss Eleanor says nothing, she is too astute to believe that Oluf is attentive to her simply for her own sake.

She begins to notice his looks and tone when addressing Sadie, and says to herself, angrily,—

"His father ruined my life, but he shall not spoil the child's. I will put it beyond his power. The son of such a father cannot be honest!"

So the next day she calls Sadie to her.

"My dear," she says, with unwonted gentleness, "I have been thinking seriously of making some arrangement for our mutual comfort. If you agree, I intend to send for Debenham, my lawyer, to draw up a statement to this effect; that you bind yourself to stay with me for two years on these conditions; that I place Dick in Debenham's office (as he foolishly wishes to become a solicitor), and that Harry shall be sent to Sandhurst as soon as he is old enough. On the other hand, if you break your agreement you receive nothing, and your brothers must fare as they can! Do you consent to this arrangement?"

Sadie stands silent a moment, then, with a burst of real feeling, she ventures to kiss her aunt's withered cheek.

"Dear aunt, you are most good to me. Of course, I agree, but—but—you will let me go home at stated intervals?"

"I don't know; but if not, you may ask one after the other of your inconveniently large family to stay here with you. So long

as they are neither noisy nor intrusive, I shall care very little. The house is big enough to hold a dozen more people. You need not kiss me again, Saditha. I haven't much belief in gratitude or affection!" and the girl beats a hasty retreat, chilled by her aunt's tone and manner, as she too often is.

She is rather startled when she is summoned the next day to Miss Eleanor's boudoir to sign a very legal-looking document, which Martha and Carry witness, and feels very much as though she had given herself body and soul over to her aunt; but there is no going back now. She is well aware that even were she inclined to do so Miss Sieveking would hold her to her bargain.

Oluf comes and goes, and with each day Sadie draws him nearer to her. The bewitching beauty, the delicious candour of this little nut-brown maid, attract him powerfully; and despite Miss Eleanor's evident disapproval, he means to win her if he can.

One day he comes upon her as she stands before a window reading a letter written on flimsy paper and in a woman's hand. There is a gleam of fun in her eyes, a slight flush on her sweet face, as she turns to him.

"I am sorry to say, Mr. Deloraine, aunt is confined to her room with a bad cold. I am sure I don't know how I can amuse you! Will you go down to Miss Emma?"

"Decidedly not! You look in such a happy frame of mind that I am convinced you have good news in your letter. Am I to share them?"

"You may read it if you like," smiling. "It is from Bessie," and she hands it to him. "There is nothing really private."

"Thanks for the confidence you repose in me. I wonder what your sister would say if she knew into whose hand her letter had fallen?"

"Attend to the letter, and don't begin to speculate!" says Sadie, santly, and he, obeying, reads, *sotto voce*:-

"DEAR DOROTHY DRAGGLETAIL,-

"(You see, like all aesthetes, I am alliterative.) How are the hermits of Thorbury? Still alive, and each cherishing her peculiar pet, her particular hobby? Honour bright, my dear, I would not stand in your shoes for a fortune; but, then, you always were a queer mortal. But since you have been gone mamma has taken it into her head to rate Alice and me on our selfishness, and elevates you into a saint, which, to say the least of it, is trying. But, there, I won't complain, for I've grand news for you to-day. Alice is engaged, and is actually to be married in August. Think of that! And now guess who is the happy man! But, I am sure, you will prove yourself 'an awful duffer' just this once, so I will have mercy and not keep you long in suspense. The infatuated swain is Mr. Fizzenden, the banker's son, and we were all afraid his 'parients' would object; but they were, on the contrary, quite enraptured with Alice's beauty and gracious manners, and accepted her joyfully. But just fancy our Alice figuring as 'Mrs. Fizzenden!' Harry and Mamie persist in calling him 'Fizzletop,' which makes our beloved sister as mad as a March hare. My Jem talks of a wedding in December, which, he says, you must attend. Aren't we going off well? Alice will write you by the next post, and, of course, you will come down for the wedding, and you must look your best, because the Fizzletops (beg pardon, Fizzendens) mean to make it an elaborate affair. Give my love to our charming aunts, and take my advice, my dear. Strangle the estimable Gipsy, and administer nine different poisons to the cat—one for each

life. After all, Sadie, you will soon return home; mamma will want you when Alice and I are gone.

"Yours always,

"BESSIE."

"She is very saucy, is she not?" asks Sadie, smiling.

"I fancy that is a family failing, Miss Saditha. But there is a queer little passage here I cannot understand. Will you help me, please? Here it is. 'After all, Sadie, you will soon return home; mamma will want you after Alice and I are gone.' Now what does that mean?"

"I think, Mr. Deloraine, the meaning is extremely plain."

"Do you? Well, I beg to differ. Sadie, what are you going to do with me?"

"With you!" she stammers. "You are talking in riddles."

"Then it is time I spoke plainly. Sadie, little darling, do you suppose that having found you, I am willing to lose you lightly? You little witch, don't you know how fondly I love you? Oh! you must not think to slip away from me in such fashion. Sweetheart, sweetheart!" holding her fast, "cannot you tell me you love me? Cannot you bid me hope?"

The hot blood rushes into the dusky face, the great, brown eyes are luminous with passion.

"You cannot mean this!" she says. "I am such an insignificant creature, and—"

"And what, you nut-brown witch?"

"And you know so little of me! You are rich and influential, and I am—"

"My dear love! the only woman in the world I would make my wife? Now, Sadie, what will you do? Will you send me away?"

"I cannot!" she says under her breath.

"I—I love you too well!"

"You darling! you darling! Kiss me, that I may know it is true."

Shyly she lifts her mouth to his, and having kissed him, hides her face on his shoulder, trembling and half afraid of her own happiness.

"Oluf," she says, after a long and blissful silence. "I wonder what Aunt Eleanor will say? I am afraid she will be angry?"

"Why need we care if she is? She is not your lawful guardian."

Then over poor Sadie's mind comes the memory of her written agreement, but she says nothing then to her lover.

"We will be married at Christmas!" he says, joyously, "and make a double wedding of it. I am quite anxious to know your friends; and, see here, Sadie, if I approve Mamie I shall make an exchange."

"You are quite welcome to do so, sir," she retorts, laughing. "But you will have to wait a long while for your bride; she is not fifteen, and in short petticoats!"

"Perhaps it would not be hard to 'cut out Jem,'" laughing.

"You would have to be a great deal handsomer than you are to do that," saucily, "and Jem is very clever."

"You little wretch!" and he catches her close. "You know well how to bewitch me. But I love you, love you, Sadie, and shall love you till I die. Pretty one, what shall I say to your mother when I introduce myself to her?"

"Say that her daughter loves you with all her heart, and that she prays her dear mother will do the same!" and then once more the dusky face is hidden, the brown head bowed. Oluf kisses the masses of waving dark hair, and then he says,—

"And what of Aunt Eleanor?"

"I don't know," faintly. "Perhaps she will be horrid to you."

"Well, I shall speak to her to-morrow, and we won't anticipate trouble."

CHAPTER V.

"What is the meaning of this?" asks Miss Eleanor, as Oluf takes Sadie's hand and leads her forward.

"It means that your niece has promised to marry me."

"Subject to my approval?"

"We should, of course, be glad to know our union is not distasteful to you, but I am afraid that having once made up our minds we are not very likely to alter them," Oluf says, smiling. "But, Miss Sieveking, I am vain enough to think you are somewhat partial to me."

"I might have expected this," the old lady says in a harsh voice, "I ought to have known that Arthur Deloraine's son could not be honourable or trustworthy."

"You have no right to say that, aunt," cries the girl indignantly.

"Silence, miss, I am speaking to Oluf Deloraine. I utterly refuse to sanction such an ill-advised engagement."

"Then, madam, I must carry my suit to Mrs. Sieveking. She is Sadie's proper and lawful guardian, and I anticipate no difficulty in winning her consent."

Then Miss Eleanor's face flushes triumphantly.

"I am willing to admit that Mrs. Sieveking is her daughter's guardian; but, foreseeing this calamity, I provided against it. My niece Saditha has signed an agreement by which she places herself wholly under my control for the next two years. Of course, you will urge that, as she is a minor, and her mother's consent was not even asked, this bond is not binding. But I believe she is too honourable to take advantage of such a quibble, and if not, she ruins her brother's prospect, entirely."

"Miss Sieveking, you have shown a degree of williness I did not credit you with, and you have deceived me from the beginning. I was under the impression that you were not unfavourable to me."

"I like you," she answers, "and take shame to myself for doing so." Then, suddenly she rises and leaning on her stick breaks out fiercely. "Years and years ago I was a loving and lovable woman, dearly devoted to my lover and my sister, and each deceived me. Then all there might have been of good in me died out. I cared less than nothing what happened next. Betrayed, thrown back upon myself, with every kind impulse stifled, every gentle womanly feeling killed, what had I to live for? Oluf Deloraine, your father held my heart in the hollow of his hand, and crushed it—thus!—and here she clenches her nervous fingers fiercely. "Drop by drop he wrung the life-blood from it, making me old and bitter before my time, turning my love for my sister into hate. Think a moment of all these long, long years of solitude and woe, of the trust betrayed, of the hungering and thirsting for love, for rest! Oh, Heaven! I was too young to be called upon to bear such a load. But I had my revenge, and on both! I would not give my sister to him. She could not please herself until she attained her majority, and long before that he had forgotten her. Do you hear? Forgotten her, and wedded another woman! I hugged myself then. I rejoiced in the success of my scheme, and she! well, she, weak and frivolous in all things else, clung on to him never to loose. When the news of his marriage came she was like a madwoman, and spoke such words as I never could forget. In that hour we parted, and from that day until this I have never seen her face. Horrible, is it not?" mockingly. "Ah! what a pitiful tragedy! What a shipwreck of two lives! Now," turning passionately upon him, "now, knowing our wretched story, what my sister and myself owe to your father, how dare you ask me for my

niece? Shall I forget whose blood is in your veins? Shall I bid her wait for you six years as I did for your father, only in the end to be deceived, and changed as I was changed. Oh, Heaven! no. I pray no other women may ever suffer as I have done. Sadie, stay with me! I will love you truly. But, oh! you poor child, I would rather see you dead than that man's wife."

Such passion in one so old and frail is terrible to see; and even Oluf, angry as he is, cannot fail to pity her.

"Miss Sieveking, my father wronged you cruelly; but do you not think you have nursed your resentment long enough? And why should I, who inherit none of my father's beauty or characteristics, inherit his inconstancy? I will not take your answer as final."

"You must! I am too old and wary to be easily defied. Go now!"

Then Sadie speaks very faintly and tremulously.

"Aunt, you have been very good to me, and, indeed, I love you for your kindness; but nothing will make me take back my promise to Oluf—nothing will make me treacherous to you. I will stay with you for the allotted term, but then I shall give myself to Oluf, to whom I belong now and for all time; and with an inexpressible tender look she turns to her lover. "Be patient, dear, and all will yet be well."

"Patient!" he echoes, forgetful of all but his love and the weary time of waiting before them. "Patient! Do not preach impossibilities, sweetheart! Come to me now; it is absurd to continue the feud. You belong to me, and I claim you."

"Just so his father would have spoken," sneers Miss Eleanor. "These Deloraines are all alike—selfish and unprincipled!"

But neither of the young people hear. Sadie is saying—

"I am bound by my promise, Oluf, and I cannot go from it; but as I love you to-day I will love you always. As I trust you now I will trust you until you break my faith, and that you will never do. Oh, my dear! my dear! do not be over angry. Surely she has some reasons for her bitterness, poor soul!"

Then Miss Eleanor advances feebly and uncertainly.

"I—I am going to my own room, and I leave you alone together now for the last time. You understand, Oluf Deloraine, your visits here must cease; but I do not forbid any correspondence between you, for I should be outwitted by you both. For the rest, I regret my folly in receiving you, and with all my might I will try to stamp that unhappy girl's love from her heart," and with this she goes out.

"Oh!" says Sadie, "how dreadful she can be! Oluf, I am frightened. I did not anticipate anything so terrible."

"Poor little woman! Poor little love! And has she made you doubt me? Are you going to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children?"

"No, no, no; but, Oluf, how she must have loved him! I am sorry for both my aunts, but sorriest for her. Her great disappointment has wholly changed and warped what I am sure was once a noble nature. Oh, my dear! oh, my dear! be true to me, for I love you more than life itself!"

"And I you; but, Sadie, what possessed you to sign that wretched old document? What a hurry you were in to give away your freedom!"

"I did not think then of this climax to our friendship, and I was so anxious to help mother and the boys. It is very hard sometimes to make both ends meet."

"But think, Sadie, when I leave you (as I must do soon), it will be for two long, awful years. Can you think calmly of them?"

"Oh, I can't, I can't!" she cries, breaking suddenly down. "What shall we do? Oluf, this anguish of parting is bitter as death."

"I will go to your mother," he says, softly, as he holds her fast, "and beg her to recall you. The help Miss Sieveking would give I am able and willing to provide; and surely your brothers are not mean enough to accept the sacrifice you propose!"

"They do not know the terms of my agreement, that was not my wish; and, poor as we are, we are too proud to let any man marry the whole family. No, dear Oluf, there is nothing for us but patience."

"And my stock is just about exhausted. Sadie, you will submit to your mother's decision. Tell me that, sweetheart?"

"No!" she says more firmly than she has yet spoken. "I will not be ungrateful and dishonourable, even for your dear sake. When you are calmer, Oluf, you will acknowledge that I should be base indeed to break a contract which benefits me and mine, and gives that poor soul nothing but my half-hearted service. Indeed, indeed! I believe she is very fond of me, and—and Oluf, when she sees how much I love you, how faithful you are to me, she will be the first to regret her harshness. She is not ungenerous."

He does not look convinced, but he will not urge her further.

"It is very hard, sweetheart, to be parted thus, and, naturally, I feel somewhat resentful; but I will say nothing that may add to your pain. I would not hurt you, darling; rather, I must help you bear your burden."

"And after all," says Sadie, with a sad, little smile, "you ought to love Aunt Eleanor. But for her we never should have met. And, when you see mamma, tell her—I am happy—and quite content to wait. Give her my dear love, and this kiss," and here she stands on tiptoe to kiss his honest face, "and say I am longing to see her with all my heart. And the girls—oh, Oluf! I cannot charge you with messages to them! I am so hungry for a sight of their dear faces that I should betray myself," and now the tears are raining down her cheeks.

"My little love! My brave little love!" Oluf cries. "What a lesson you teach me! I will complain no more, say nothing that may vex and disturb you—and you, on your part, must promise never to trust me less—to love me less."

"I shall never cease to love you until my heart has ceased to beat. I shall never doubt you until you come to me and say, 'I have failed in my allegiance, give me back my promise.'"

"And that will never be! Have no fear, Sadie—"

Here a bell rings out sharply,—

"That is Aunt Eleanor's summons. You must go now, Oluf. Oh, my dear! oh, my dear! How hard it is to part!" and as she clings sobbing to him he sets his teeth, lest some expression of pain or weakness should escape him.

"Say good-bye, dear Oluf, and go; the longer we linger the worse it is!"

"You are unlike Juliet," he says, with a mirthless laugh; "don't you know she cries,—"

"Parting is such sweet sorrow,

That I could say good-night until to-morrow?"

"Ah! but she did not anticipate such a long separation as ours!"

Again Miss Eleanor's bell sounds, and this time Sadie lifts her face to her lover.

"Good-bye, and Heaven be with you in all your ways; bless you, keep you, and bring you back to the girl whose whole heart is yours, whose life, if Heaven will it so, shall be dedicated to your service!"

"My darling! my darling! Kiss me once again! Be true to me in and through all! Ah! she has fainted!"

He lays her upon a couch, kisses the pale face once with desperate love and longing; then he summons Martha.

"Attend to Miss Sieveking, please. I am afraid she is very ill," and bestowing a large gratuity upon her, he hurries out, not venturing to cast a backward look at her. And when he has been gone a little while Miss Eleanor enters,—

"Why did you not answer my bell, Sadie? Oh! (as the girl drags herself erect). What is the matter? Are you ill? Poor child! poor child! do not I know all your trouble? Martha, you may leave us," and when the woman is gone, she gently takes the girl's cold hands in hers that are pretty still, despite her age. "Dear child, try to forget this love story; believe me you will be happier; there is no man worthy a good woman's whole-hearted love!"

"I shall forget when I am dead," wearily, "and he is as high above me as the heavens. Please say no more on the subject, aunt."

Two days later she received a letter from her mother in which she finds this passage:

"I regret extremely that you should have given such a promise to your aunt, but, having made it, it seems to me that in honour you are bound to keep it. But understand, Sadie, I shall be glad, most glad, to have you at home again, for I am unhappy without you. I have stated your case plainly to Dick and Harry, and they stoutly declare they will not purchase their prosperity by the means you propose. My dearest, if the task is too great for you, come home at once. When Alice and Bessie are married I shall be less straitened in circumstances. Mr. Deloraine is with us, and will remain here for a week. Already he is a great favourite with us, and I—even I, your mother, think he is almost worthy my little girl!"

How much this passage strengthens Sadie, who can tell? Kissing her mother's letter she whispers,—

"I will bear it all! I can bear it all, having his love and my mother's."

CHAPTER VI.

It is the end of August, and lovely Alice Sieveking is now a bride! Aunt Eleanor has allowed Sadie to run down to Saxtown for the wedding, stipulating that she shall not be absent more than six days. She has even given her a handsome dress, "because," she says, "if people will be fools enough to countenance such ceremonies they should appear well-clad!" and, to the young bride she sends a cheque for fifty pounds, accompanied by a slip of paper, on which is written:

"Take my advice and remain single, if you would be happy; but as I know you will not listen to an old woman's words, I can only recommend you to spend the enclosed cheque on any special fancy you have!"

It is quite late on the wedding-eve when Sadie arrives, but the youngsters are still up, and greet her with boisterous affection. Alice, lovelier than ever, seems pleased to see her, and even accompanies her to the little familiar room she used to call her own.

"Oh!" says Sadie, winding her arms about her sister, "how good it is to be with you! And, Alice, dear, how heartily I pray you may find every blessing, every happiness in your new life!"

"I have small doubt of that," answers Alice, flushing and smiling. "Why, Mr. Fizzenden simply worships me! He can deny me nothing!"

"And you love him, very dearly?"

"I like him better than any man I know," Alice answers calmly, "although he is not

so nice-looking as Oluf Deloraine; and then, his name is so stupid, 'Tom Fizzenden;' but he is very rich and well-born, and one can't have everything, you know."

Sadie opens her eyes wide.

"And you are going to marry a man whose estimate you can take so coolly. Ally, Ally, dear! don't do it! You'll be sorry some day!"

"That I shall not," yawning. "I hate to be poor, and I never could love any creature as I love myself, so you need have no fear of me, Sadie. I shall be very happy and comfortable; and oh! you must see my dress! It is of ivory satin, and such rich lace! Mrs. Fizzenden would present me with it. I guess I shall make quite an imposing spectacle to-morrow; and, I say, Sadie, just tell Aunt Eleanor when you write I am much obliged to her, and will thank her myself as soon as I get an opportunity."

And, although Sadie feels very sorry for Mr. Fizzenden, she knows it is useless to say more.

In the morning she is down first, looking very bewitching in her costume of primrose sarah silk and crimson poppies.

Mrs. Fizzenden has insisted that her own maid shall dress the bride, and that august personage will allow no visitors during the process.

Sadie flutters about from one familiar object to another, touching this with gentle hands, laying lips to that, until her mother enters, when she turns to her quickly.

"Now, now," she says, in mock reproof, "you have been crying and spoiling your bonny face! Why, mother dear, if you have handsome daughters you must expect to lose them" (this saucily); "and, if you please, how do I look?"

"Oh, Sadie, Sadie, what shall I do when Bessy is gone?" says poor Mrs. Sieveking, with a sob. "How I wish you had never gone to Thorbury, for I miss you more and more every day."

"Dear mother; and I am selfish enough to be glad you do. Mother, mother! When I am married, and the young ones at school, your home must be with us!"

"My dear, you must ask Oluf's permission first," laughing hysterically. "Oh, Sadie, in this one thing you are as lucky as you deserve to be, for Oluf Deloraine is all a man should be. I am proud of him."

And before the girl can thank her for those words she is called away to attend to some little matter. Then Mamie bounds into the room, careless of her unusual finery.

"Sadie, isn't this jolly? And it will be still jollier for you soon. Oh, you need not open your brown eyes so very wide. I'm not going to tell you more, or ma and Bessy would shake me into 'smithereens.' But do you know what dear old Fizzletop's present to you is? All the rest of us have gold bangles; but he says, from what he hears of you, you are far and away the nicest girl (except Alice) he has ever known, and you must have something better. So he has bought you a lovely gold necklet set with rubies. Think of it, Sadie! Don't I wish I were 'brown as a berry;' then, perhaps, my complexion would have been considered."

"But, Mamie, I would rather not take so valuable a present!" distressfully.

"Oh, fiddlesticks! If Oluf don't object, why should you? By the way, Sadie, there's a visitor ma wants you to take care of until we are all ready. Will you?"

"Certainly; send her in. Is she young or old. What is her name?"

"She's pretty young," answers Mamie, with a wicked smile, "and her name is Miss Jemima Jenkins. I'll send her in," and she runs out, slamming the door behind her.

A moment later she reappears, and with a profound curtsy, announces "Miss Jemima Jenkins!" and with a shout of laughter retreats as Oluf enters.

Just whilst one man may count five the girl looks at him in happy surprise; then with a cry of "This is too good to be true. Oluf! Oluf!" runs into his ready arms.

"It is true, nevertheless, whatever these wicked folks have told you! Why, how bonny you are! Stand back, and let me look at you. No, no; after all I think I prefer you here."

And he takes her in his arms, drawing her close to his breast, whilst his kisses fall upon her sweet brow and lips.

"They told me nothing," she says, when she can speak. "I had not the faintest idea I was to meet you here. I dare not dream of such happiness; and now you have come you will not run away. I have six whole days before me!"

"Which I shall share. Do you suppose for an instant I should leave Saxtown whilst it contains you? And when you must go I shall take you myself to Delaware Lodge, although I may not enter; but I trust you to move Miss Sieveking's heart, because I am sure (roguishly) your mother is not equal to the fatigue of a third wedding. We ought to be married at Christmas!"

"Oh, no, no! Oluf, we are very happy as we are now."

"Now! But what when you are gone? Shall we be happy then?"

"The carriages wait!" says Harry's saucy voice. "Shall we send them away for an hour or two? Fizzenden won't mind, and the bridesmaids daren't scold. Great Scott, Sadie, you're as red as a pickle cabbage!"

"What an odious comparison!" cries Sadie, making a feint of boxing his ears.

"I suppose you wanted me to say, 'Red as a rose is she;' but there's precious little of the rose about you, Sadie; you're more the sort of thing that donkeys feed on. Christopher! stop her, Oluf, or she will leave me biddheaded!"

"Which might be an improvement," laughs Oluf. "Your hair borders on scarlet, doesn't it, Harry? No offence—but I'm like Washington, I never told a lie, and—"

"Oh, shut up!" laughing. "You know my wool is dark chestnut."

"Chestnut!" murmurs Oluf. "What bliss (in his case) to be so blind! Come, Sadie, I see for once Master Harry has given us reliable information; the carriages are really waiting."

The next day the little family settles into the old routine, and Oluf and his "bonnie wee thing" have unlimited and uninterrupted intercourse with each other. What a happy time they spend! Were there ever six such golden days since the world began? But, ah! the close of them is very bitter! Oluf would fain go with Sadie to Thorbury, but this her mother forbids.

"No," she says; "she has elected to go back to the Lodge, and we must not make her life harder than it need be. Your going would anger Miss Eleanor."

Mrs. Sieveking herself accompanies her the greater part of the journey, and Sadie begs she will go on with her to Delaware Lodge, but the mother shakes her head.

"No, my dear! You forget your aunt stated most emphatically that, although she had taken you, she had no intention of permitting the rest of your family to swoop down upon her."

So the latter part of the journey is performed alone, and Martha meets her as before.

"Eh, Miss Sadie," she says, warmly, "it's a blessed hour that brings you back; but I reckon you've just about cried your

pretty eyes out; and Miss Eleanor will want to know what makes your face so pale."

"It was hard to part with them all, Martha, and I'm afraid I broke down very selfishly. How is my aunt?"

"Not so well as I'd like to see her, and she's missed you that sorely you can't tell. Every day she has visited your room, Miss Sadie; and would sit there looking that mournful it made my heart ache to see her. If she love's any one it's you, though she does try so hard to hide it often."

"Thank you, Martha, for telling me this. The loneliness will be easier to bear if I feel there is some one to care for me here," and she walks on with a lighter step and brighter face.

She finds Miss Eleanor sitting before an open window, a book upon her lap. She does not turn as Sadie enters, but asks, in her usual sharp tone,—

"Is that you, Saditha?"

"Yes, aunt," the girl answers, chilled by her manner.

"Then make haste to remove your hat and cloak; dinner is waiting."

Surely Martha must be mistaken. If Miss Eleanor loved her she would greet her more cordially than this, and with a heavy heart the girl goes to her room.

It is very fresh and sweet, and on a little table is a great bowl of roses and mignonette, arranged by other and more tasteful hands than Martha's.

"After all," says Sadie to herself, "she must care a little for me, or she would not trouble herself to do this."

The following meal is a very silent one, but Miss Eleanor hardly ever removes her eyes from the girl's face, and a queer shadow rests upon her own. But when they return to the drawing-room, she says, abruptly,—

"Why did you come back?"

"Because I had promised you to do so," Sadie answers, simply.

"Pooh! promises are made to be broken; and I'll be bound you did not come of your own free will!"

"Indeed, yes, aunt!" earnestly. "My mother would not coerce me."

"Then why are your cheeks so pale, and your eyes so swollen?"

"It was very bitter to leave them all," Sadie answers, under her breath. "I love them so dearly, and they are more than good to me."

"Oh, youth! youth! youth!" says the other, passionately, "what a happy golden time it is! How full of love and trust! Sadie, come here. Sit on this stool at my feet, and tell me truly, did not you hate me for bringing you back?" and she lifts the young face between her trembling hands, and peers through the gathering dusk into the lovely, honest eyes.

"No, aunt; and I thank you for giving me such a pleasant time. Dear Aunt Eleanor, I wish you knew how sorry—how very sorry—I am for you."

"Sorry! You are the first who has pitied poor Eleanor Sieveking in all these long, long years. Sadie, I have missed you sorely. You have grown so dear to me. Is it not foolish for me to love you thus?—but it is true. Do not leave me again; I shall not try your patience long. Stay with me to the end. I am a poor lonely old woman—a poor lonely old woman. Year in and year out I have lived a solitary life, but now I would not die alone!" and then, to Sadie's dismay, this strong-willed, stern woman, bows her poor withered face in her hands, and weeps without restraint.

Afraid to speak, conscious only of an overwhelming pity and strong desire to comfort her, the girl rises, and throwing an arm about her, kisses the furrowed brow

very, very gently. And presently the tears cease, the poor lady looks up half-ashamed. "There, I am quiet again, child! Did I frighten you? It is years since I have wept, but my tears have washed much of my bitterness away."

"Then, dear aunt," timidly, "let me bring Miss Emma to you."

"No, no; not yet. Sadie, you will care for me a little," wistfully.

"I shall love you very dearly if you will let me. And, oh! how glad I should be to know you were at peace with your sister!"

"Perhaps to-morrow you may talk to me of her, but not to-night. Sit down again, here, where I can see and touch you, my little brown fairy. And what are you thinking now that your eyes are so solemn?"

"I am going to make a confession, aunt. Mr. Deloraine was staying with mother and the girls through my whole holiday. I—I thought you ought to know. Are you very angry?"

"Not angry, child, only sorry. I wish you need never have learned love's lesson, or, learning it, had chosen some other man."

"One day, Aunt Eleanor, you will learn to know him better, and congratulate me on my happiness. Now, let me light the lamp and read to you."

CHAPTER VII.

IN the next few days that follow Sadie is far from unhappy; for, although Miss Eleanor cannot quite divest herself of her odd, sharp manner, there are times when she is so tender, so gentle, that, old as she is, Sadie can quite imagine how fascinating she must have been as a young woman.

There are sparkles of humour, too, quaint and bright; and now that she has unbent she has such a fund of folk-lore that she proves a most amusing companion. Taking advantage of her softened mood, Sadie slips down to Miss Emma's apartments, intent upon effecting the reconciliation she so much desires. To her it is an awful and most lamentable thing that these two sisters, standing as they do, all alone in the world, with so few years between them and the grave, should mutually cherish such bitter hate and animosity.

Miss Emma receives her somewhat frigidly.

"This is a great piece of condescension," she says, slightly sneering. "Since you have returned, your visits to me are like angels' visits—very few and far between."

"I did not mean to neglect you," the girl answers, temperately. "But, of course, my first duty is to Aunt Eleanor."

"Of course," says Miss Emma. "She's an old woman, and can't live very long; and, no doubt, you think a snug legacy would not be unacceptable."

The colour flames high in the dusky face.

"You know that you are wronging me now; no one would regret Aunt Eleanor's death more than I. She is very kind to me—kinder than I can say!"

"Oh!—tossing her head, "you need not congratulate yourself on her favour; she is in her dotage."

For a moment indignation holds Sadie speechless; but she has come on an errand of peace, and must not endanger her cause by any display of temper or discomfort. So she, gently possessing herself of Miss Emma's hands, says entreatingly,—

"Dear aunt, don't you think this feud has lasted long enough? Would it not be happier for both to forget and forgive? I am sure if you would make ever so little an advance Aunt Eleanor would meet you generously and affectionately."

"I make any advance! Are you mad?"

It was Eleanor wronged me, not I her! Arthur Deloraine would never have married her, and she would not let him marry me. Did she send you on this errand?"

"No, aunt; she knows nothing of it. I came of my own accord."

"And what right have you to meddle with matters that do not concern you? Go back to Eleanor, and say, if she will acknowledge herself in the wrong, and her sorrow for all the grief she has made me bear, I will try to forgive her, and will return her visits."

And here Sadie's patience fails her utterly, and starting to her feet, she says,—

"How dare you talk of wrong and forgiveness, who blighted all your sister's life, and made a scoundrel of an honest man?" and before the astonished lady can retort she hurries from the room, burning with most unrighteous wrath.

Miss Emma rings for her maid.

"Carry, do not admit Miss Saditha here again; she has been most insolent. Really, I think madness is quite infectious, for she is quite as mad as my unhappy sister. Give me my vinaigrette, please. Oh, dear! oh dear! how that dreadful girl has upset my nerves! Why," with a touch of that vanity which in her youth tempted her to win her sister's lover from her, "why, to hear her talk, one would think Eleanor had been the saint and I the sinner! Could I help it if Mr. Deloraine admired me most—ay, and loved me better than his life! Are you listening, Carry?"

"Yes, miss," demurely.

"He could deny me nothing; and there were other gentlemen quite as foolish about me. Indeed, I was the belle and reigning toast of the place," this with a giggle.

"Really, miss, I shouldn't have thought it," says Carry, maliciously.

"And why not, pray?" angrily. "My complexion was pure white and pink, and such masses of hair I had! whilst Miss Eleanor was always a big, ordinary woman, with brown hair and cold grey eyes."

"She's got a lovely little hand and foot!" says Carry, with a significant glance at the other's large, ill-formed members. "And I fancy, miss, she was always very striking looking."

"That is all you know about it," retorts Miss Emma, coarsely. "And if you are here only to insult me, you had best leave me at once."

And this the triumphant Carry is not slow to do.

When Sadie goes back to Miss Sieveking after her unsuccessful mission she finds her lying down.

"Aren't you well, aunt?" she asks, because the old lady is not given to luxurious lounging.

"Well, Sadie? Oh, yes, thank you. But where have you been?"

"To see Aunt Emma," flushing hotly, and as the keen grey eyes rest on the disturbed little face their owner says, gently,—

"Can I guess your errand? Was it to make peace between us? Yes? What did Emma say?"

"I—I think I must have blundered, auntie. I—I made her angry."

"And you would rather not tell me what she said? But if I insist, Sadie, child!—I—I shall not be vexed. What was her reply?"

"That if you would acknowledge yourself in the wrong she would—try to forgive you," Sadie answers, slowly and reluctantly.

A red flush surges over the poor withered face, and the grey eyes flash with wonderful fire; but not a word does Miss Eleanor speak, only she nervously clasp and unclasp her tiny hands, and her breath comes

hard through her set teeth. But before Sadie dare break in upon her musings she is herself again, and says, quite calmly,—

"I ought to have known how it would be. But, child, we are both old women now—and—and you have softened me. I regret now all my harshness, all my wasted, dark-hatened years. I am the eldest; it is for me to set the example. And perhaps I forgot to consider how weak Emma was in all things but her love for Mr. Deloraine. To-morrow, dear, we will go together, and you shall show us how to meet each other graciously."

What an effort it costs this proud, strong woman to make so great a concession perhaps Sadie alone could guess. With a loving gesture she throws her arms about Miss Eleanor's neck.

"Dear aunt, you have made me very happy! We shall yet form a joyous circle."

"I hope so—I hope so! Now take me to bed, dear, I am very tired. Lay my book beside me—and—and—would you mind lifting Gipsy on to the bed; she seems restless? There, lay her at the foot. Oh, child! to think that throughout the greater part of my life I have had to look to dumb animals for love!"

"Do not think of such things now. And are you quite wise to read in bed, when you are so tired? Suppose you fell asleep, and the candle caught your book or clothes?"

Miss Eleanor smiles.

"My dear, I like to see you anxious for me; but there is no danger, I can assure you. It is a habit of fifty years' standing, and no accident has occurred through it yet."

"But the pitcher that goes oftenest to the well gets broken at last."

"Well, well, Sadie, I'm too old now to alter, so must run the risk. Good-night, dear child, good-night, and may Heaven bless you!" Her faded eyes follow the girl affectionately as she goes from the room; then with a little sigh, as she takes up her book, she says, "I have been a hard and foolish woman. That child would not have wasted her whole life as I have done."

In the middle of the night Sadie is awakened by the sharp ringing of Miss Eleanor's bell. Jumping out of bed and throwing on her dressing-gown she opens her door to be met by a cloud of smoke which nearly suffocated her.

"Martha! Martha!" she cries, loudly, and rushes to her aunt's room to find the bed in flames, and Gipsy lying charred and stiff upon the hearthrug.

Quick as lightning she rolls up the carpet, and with hasty fingers throws it over the flames, regardless of the burns she is receiving.

"Oh, thank Heaven! you are come!" she cries, as Martha enters, hurriedly. "Help me, please. Oh! Martha, is she dead, or has she fainted?"

"Poor dear! poor dear!" says Martha. "She does look awful. Oh! what a blessing you woke, Miss Sadie. My dear mistress, my dear mistress, that it should come to this!" and all the while she is talking she gives ready and skilful aid, so that when Carry comes running in, white and scared, the fire is extinguished, and already Sadie and Martha are stripping off the charred sheets and blankets.

Carry touches Gipsy with a contemptuous foot.

"The dog is dead, and I am glad, but I shall be sorry if Miss Eleanor's hurt. Oh, see! her face is getting a little colour, and her lids are beginning to quiver."

The next moment the grey eyes opened slowly, and their first glance rests on Sadie's anxious face.

"I am very sorry," she says, dreamily

"You warned me only to-night, child, and I wouldn't heed you."

"Dear aunt," Sadie cries, tearfully (for the excitement and burns begin to tell upon her), let me see your hurts."

"I am not hurt at all," in the same languid manner, "only I was very frightened, and I tremble still like a wind-shaken reed. I must have fallen asleep over my book, and when I woke, the flames were rushing up towards me, and Gipsy was feebly whining. I rang my bell once and tried to rise, but could not; and then I seemed to fall in a stupor all at once," and now she subsides into unconsciousness again.

"Go for Dr. Potter," says Sadie; "and you and I, Martha, must get her into my room. She cannot stay here."

"She's a heavy woman to lift, miss," Carry says quietly. "You'd better let me help first to get her to bed. Then I'll run fast enough for a doctor. Lor! what a mercy she ain't burnt to death!"

In some way they convey Miss Eleanor to her niece's room, and then the good-natured Carry rushes downstairs intent upon her errand. But she is intercepted by Miss Emma.

"What is the meaning of this commotion? And where are you going at this unseemly hour?"

"I'm going for the doctor. Miss Eleanor's set fire to herself."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! Are you quite sure the flames are out? Is it safe for me to remain here? Carry, you must not go. I cannot be left alone."

"You're all right, Miss Emma," Carry cries, irately, "and I must go."

"Then," whispers the other, "I will discharge you to-morrow."

"All right, miss; there's lots of places as good as this, I reckon," and she flies out of the hall door without waiting for further remonstrance, and Miss Emma retreats to her room, there to crouch crying before the fire.

Doctor Potter arrives quickly, and is closeted some time with Sadie and her aunt; and, as he comes downstairs, Miss Emma, looking very old and agitated, waylays him.

"Is she much hurt, doctor? Oh, you can't tell how frightened I have been."

"She has received hardly any bodily injury; the flames scarcely touched her, but it has been a serious shock to the system, and I am afraid she may succumb to it."

"She is a very old woman—years and years older than I am," returns the lady. "Oh, dear! how foolish she was to read by candle-light. It's a mercy she did not fire the whole house. Where is my niece?"

"With your sister; her hands and arms are badly burned. She is a brave young lady. Won't you go up and see your sister, Miss Emma?"

"I! No, my nerves are already too much shaken. Good-night, doctor."

"Good-night," gruffly. Then to himself (for he is an old man, and knows the sisters' history), "What a fool any man must have been to leave Eleanor Sieveking to her soulless, heartless sister. Poor Eleanor! Life has been cruel to her."

"Sadie," said Miss Sieveking, faintly, "will you fetch Emma. I would like to die in peace with her. Don't cry child, I suffer no pain, I am only weak and languid, and Doctor Potter says I may not last forty-eight hours. Then I want to see Timson (her solicitor), I must make my will; it ought to have been done before. What is that you say? Wait until I am stronger! I shall never be that, Sadie. Life is over for me, and I am glad. But go to Emma, and say I am sorry for the past. I would like to be friends with her."

Sadie needs no second bidding; and Miss

Emma, having adjusted cap and collar, goes upstairs with her. So at last these two, who have never met for years, since both were young and comely, yet who have never been separated save by a flight of shallow stairs, are face to face again.

"Good gracious!" cries the younger, starting back, and all forgetful of her vanished youth. "You are a very old woman, Eleanor. I should never have recognised you had we met elsewhere. And, oh! how did you contrive to set fire to your bed? We might all have been burnt."

The other puts out one hand, small and delicate still.

"Sister, with a full heart I ask you to let the past be forgotten. We have both erred, but I most of all. I was so much older than you, I ought to have been wiser."

"That is what I thought at the time," says Emma, coolly, and Sadie longs to shake her; "but you always had a dreadful temper. Still, I hope I am a Christian, and I am quite ready to forget and forgive."

"Would you kiss me, Emma? How dear we once were to each other, and how pretty you were! If only we had not loved the same man—you and I—if only we had clung to each other more! Emma, they tell me I am dying, and I know it is true. I am even glad to go, and I think, when your time comes (as it must be soon) you will not regret it."

"What are you talking about, Eleanor? I am a comparatively young woman; but you always did try to pose as my contemporary. There, I have kissed you, and I hope you are satisfied. I am glad to find you so remorseful for the wrong you did me, and if I am well enough I will come up to-morrow. This, ah! this meeting has been painful to me, recalling as it does, so many old memories," and with no word to Sadie she passes out, Miss Eleanor's eyes following her dreamily and sadly.

"Poor Emma," she murmurs; "it was foolish to expect much of her, and yet I did. Then I loved her so."

Later on comes Mr. Timson, and whilst he receives Miss Sieveking's instructions, Sadie is banished the room, Miss Emma and Carry being called in to witness the will. Then for a little while the dying woman is alone, and it is growing quite dusk when she summons her niece to her bedside.

"It won't be long now, Sadie, darling! I said I would not try you over much, my loneliness and sorrow are ended now. Thank Heaven! thank Heaven! And when I am gone I want you to be kind to Martha. I am glad Gipsy is dead; she was not pleasant to others, though always faithful and affectionate to me." Then, after a long pause, "Sadie, you have been as an angel of mercy to me, and I have been often harsh with you. I was angry when I knew you preferred Oluf Deloraine to me, and afraid, too, for your happiness; but I was even jealous of your love for your own people. All that is past and gone, and as dying eyes see clearly things that lie before one's loved ones, I see you a happy, honest wife, glad and busy in your house, never quite forgetful of the poor old maid who loved you well—whose soul you came to save."

Sadie bends to kiss her, and in the dead of the night Miss Sieveking passes away in her sleep, as quietly as a little child.

When the will is read it surprises them all. One passage reads thus,—

"To my sister I leave nothing, she being possessed of plenty; but to my dear and honoured niece, Sadie Sieveking, I will and bequeath the sum of £250 (half my income) yearly to her and her heirs; to Mrs. Cyril Sieveking I bequeath an annuity of £200, at her death to be equally distributed between her five children (Dick, Harry,

Bessie, Mamie, and Susie); and to Martha Halidon, my faithful servant, a yearly sum of £50 so long as she lives; at her death it is to pass to the Havington Convalescent Home; and it is my earnest wish that my niece, Sadie Sieveking, shall not delay her marriage longer than is absolutely necessary."

"I always maintain it is better to be born lucky than rich," says Bessie Transome, "Just look at Sadie! What other girl could have softened poor Eleanor Sieveking's heart? Then her husband is rich, influential, and devoted to her! (Oh! yes, Jem, I know how jealous you are). And did you ever see such a lovely boy as young Oluf? whilst that silly old woman, Martha, swears by her, and I verily believe would kiss the hem of her garment if she dared. I consider Sadie the luckiest woman on earth!"

"And she deserves to be," says Susie, who is just promoted to long frocks. "She's an angel, 'dark, and tender, and true.' You call Alice lovely, but I prefer Sadie's style, and she's the best of us all."

"Comparisons are odious," says Oluf, emerging from his seat behind the low growing bushes; "but, upon my soul, Susie, you are quite right in this instance. I am very proud of my wife, and would not change her dark skin for the loveliest pink and white. For my own part, I prefer my little gipsy."

"Where is Emma Sieveking?" asked Jem Transome.

"Touring and playing the idiot generally," answers Susie, perily.

"Poor old soul! I was very angry with her once," laughs Oluf. "She said, 'If you want to be happy never marry a dark woman.' It's my firm conviction that though they tell us Helen of Troy was fair, she was really as brown as a berry, but all Sadie's happiness comes to her only as 'HER JUST REWARD!'"

[THE END.]

ONLY ONCE.

You ask me, love, how many times
I think of you a day,
I frankly answer only once,
And mean just what I say.

You seem perplexed and somewhat sad,
But wait and hear the rhyme;
Pray how can one do more than once
What one does all the time?

Nickel-Plated Salt Cellar & Spoon.

(See Illustration on back page.)

This Present is for you.

A charming and dainty Salt Cellar which will ornament your table. Lady ——— sent for one of them and immediately she received it sent for another. You can have one for yourself as a gift if you will do us a little service. Send us 1s. 5d. for twelve copies of this issue of the LONDON READER and they will be sent post free, together with your present. It will not take you five minutes to sell the papers amongst your friends, who will only be too delighted to read the fascinating stories it contains. Address your letters to the Puzzle Editor, LONDON READER, 50 & 52, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.

It is our duty when we have discovered a good thing

Society

It has been noticed by many that the Queen is looking younger and lovelier than ever, and this may be partly due to a change she has made in her coiffure. Her hair is now worn much fuller than it used to be, and this lends an added charm and softness to her beautiful face.

PRINCE EDWARD OF YORK, who attained the mature age of seven years on June 23, is a precocious child, and certainly not lacking in a realisation of his own importance. He is already the hero of a hundred tales, most of them fabulous, but all point to the fact that his little Royal Highness, although deeply interested in soldiers, has, like his father, an intense love for the sea service. While the Duke of Cornwall and York was commanding the *Crescent* in 1898, Prince Edward displayed an insatiable curiosity regarding the vessel and its workings, penetrating into every part of it, and persecuting his father and the other officers with intelligent enquiries. His favourite toys are ships, of which he possesses a vast variety. The other day he was playing rather roughly with a large model yacht, flapping the sails about in a manner dangerous to himself and those near him. "If you are not careful," said a bystander, "you will get that sail on the top of your head." Prince Edward looked up with a portentous wink, and observed, "I've got a grandfather."

It is not altogether surprising that the Duke of Argyll should be, as is announced, offering the island of Tiree for sale, as well as the lease of Inverary Castle. The Princess Louise has never taken very kindly to her Argyllshire home, and, as for Tiree, it is of little interest to her except as a source of revenue. The island is about fourteen miles in extent from north to south, and varies in breadth from one to five miles. The Duke gives the area as 21,000 acres, but most gazetteers say about 19,000 is its extent. The island abounds in marble, of which it is said the shores on the rocks are also entirely composed; but for some unexplained cause the quarries cannot be worked. Scotsmen generally will regret if Inverary Castle should pass, even on a lease, out of the Argyll family. It is the principal seat of the Duke's ancient and powerful house, and is one of the most historically fascinating homes in Scotland.

THE sorely afflicted Empress Charlotte of Mexico has just attained her sixty-second year. For thirty-four long years she lived in complete retirement at Laeken, just outside her brother's beautiful capital. Few stories are sadder than hers. At the age of seventeen she married the young, handsome Archduke Maximilian, one of the most chivalrous sons of the ill-fated house of Hapsburg. Soon after their marriage, leaving their fairy palace of Miramar, overlooking the blue waters of the Adriatic, the young Archduke and his bride sailed away to win a crown overseas in Mexico. For four years the young Emperor seemed firmly seated on his troublesome throne, and then the storm broke, ending with the hideous assassination of the Emperor, while his wife, a hunted fugitive, barely escaped with her life, and that only at the expense of her reason. In her mental numbness fate, perhaps, softened the blow, for it was long before she understood the pathetic message her gallant husband wrote her on the morning of his execution. "I fell gloriously, overpowered, but not dishonoured, and if God sees your suffering is too great and soon calls you to rejoin me, I will bless the Hand that has laid so heavily upon us both." From the shock of that terrible blow the poor lady has never recovered.

Statistics

As a guide to the expenses of the Court to-day it is of interest to recall some of the items of the days of William IV. (says a writer in *Chamber's Journal*). In the Lord Chamberlain's department during the years 1831-36 the tradesmen's bills reached an average of £42,000 to £43,000 a year. The upholsterers and cabinet makers take first place with from £10,000 to £12,500 every year. The locksmiths, ironmongers, and armourers range from £2,372 to £4,119 per year. Washing is a heavy item, and averages £3,000 per annum, and in this connection it is curious to find the soap bill amounting to over £400 yearly. In the Lord Steward's department during the same period the outgoings ranged from £35,000 to £92,065 a year, including from £757 to £326 a year for "allowances for beer and board." The return of the Master of the Horse's department averaged a little below £40,000 a year, and the chief items are for liveries, forage, farriery, horses, carriages, harness, and saddlery. The Pension list of William IV. was burdened with £75,000 a year. In those days pensions oozed out of every corner of the public accounts. Queen Victoria changed all this when she came to the throne, so that the sum charged on the public accounts on this score was £24,059 19s. 4d., a matter for congratulation, and an arrangement under which pensions are granted that can hardly be improved upon.

Gems

It is by presence of mind in untried emergencies that the native metal of a man is tested.

Good counsels observed are chains to grace, which, neglected, prove halters to strange undutiful children.

There are seasons when to be still demands immeasurably higher strength than to act. Composure is often the highest result of power.

A PERFECT human life—that is, a life in which all the bodily and mental powers of man are fully developed and exercised—is, according to Friedrich Paulsen, the highest good for the individual.

WHAT a curious path faith often seems to make for mortal feet, leading them exactly whither they have resolved not to go, and shutting up against those ways which seemed so clear and plain.

Wearied Eyes.

There is a peculiar notion that it is much more dangerous to tire the eyes by use than it is to tire any other organ of the body. It is not necessarily injurious to the legs, or the arms, or the brain, to become tired, for proper rest may restore all these to their normal condition. Proof readers, female servants and mechanics, who use their eyes for a long time upon near objects, must of necessity weary the muscles that adjust the eye to vision; but if the weariness is compensated for by rest at proper intervals, there will be no harm done to the eyes, for they are so constructed that they can bear great fatigue as well as any other part of the body. Education would cease, all mechanical work would soon have an end, if the eyes of school children, and of workmen in certain branches of industry, were never tired. Eyes are rarely overworked, even if they feel tired when the task is done, if their natural power and freshness return after the proper intervals of rest during the day and after reposeful slumber at night.

Facetiæ.

"AND is the air healthy here?" asked a visitor at a mountain resort. "Excellent, sir, excellent. One can become a centenarian here in a little while."

"WHAT have you decided to give Tom for his birthday?" Mrs. Tom: "A nice collar and cuff-box. It will be so handy to keep my buttons, thread, and scissors in."

LAID HER UP.—Nodd: "Our nursemaid has just had a terrible fit of sickness." Todd: "Yes! What was the matter?" Nodd: "By mistake she took some medicine she was going to give the baby."

FITTING THE OCCASION.—"Have you anything to say before we eat you?" said the King of the Cannibal Isles to the missionary. "I have," was the reply. "I want to talk to you awhile on the advantages of a vegetable diet."

VETERANS OF THE WARS.—"Want some medicine? What kind of medicine?" "Oh, some kind of vermifuge, I suppose." "Where does the seat of difficulty seem to be?" "In my wooden leg, mister. It's getting all wormeaten."

PRODUCTIVE LAND.—"Is the ground around her very fertile?" asked the visitor. "Well," answered Farmer Comtossel, "us reg'lar agriculturalists can't seem to do much with it. But some o' these real estate companies has managed to raise two or three crops o' buildin' lots off'n it."

SAVING HIM TROUBLE.—Husband (leaving for fishing trip): "Well, good-bye, dear." Wife: "Good-bye, Harry. Take good care of yourself. By the way, you needn't stop at the fish market on your way home. I'll go down some time during the day and order myself."

GROUND PLAN COMPLETED.—Naggus (literary editor): "How is your new society novel getting on, Bonus?" Bonus (struggling author): "Splendidly. I've got the French phrases I am going to use in the story all selected. There's nothing to do now but to fill in the English and divide it into chapters."

TIME'S CHANGES.—Jinrik: "Hello, Blobbs. I haven't seen you for a year; and the last time we met you were having a row with your best girl because she wouldn't marry you. How are matters now?" Blobbs: "Oh! they've changed." Jinrik: "Ah!" Blobbs: "Yes, she married me, and now I'm having a row because she did."

A TALL marine stopped and called a shoeblack to polish his boots. The feet of the marine were in proportion to his height, and the boy, looking at the tremendous boots before him, knelt down on the pavement and called to a chum near at hand:—"Jim, come over and gie's a hand, will yez, I've an army contract here."

WHEN THEY BEGIN.—Wholesale Merchant: "No use stopping off at Lawnville. That town has been burned to the ground. Not a store left." Drummer: "You don't say. I hadn't heard about it." Merchant: "Nor I; but it must be so. I saw an item in the paper to-day saying that the citizens of Lawnville were talking about organising a fire department."

EASILY SATISFIED.—Pat had heard reports affecting a bank in which he had deposited his savings. Presenting himself at the counter, he said peremptorily, as he held out a cheque, "I want me money." The official addressed quietly counted out the correct amount and handed it out. "Then you've got it," exclaimed the depositor, his ire subsiding. "There it is, replied the clerk. "I don't want it. You may keep it." And he went away, satisfied with the bank's solidity.

To pass the knowledge on to our friends.

Guy Forrester's Secret.

By FLORENCE HODGKINSON.

Author of "IVY'S PERIL," "DOLLY'S LEGACY," "DOROTHY'S HEARTACHE," &c.

PROLOGUE.

PEOPLE often called Guy Forrester one of Fortune's favourites, and it must be confessed, in his early days, the fickle goddess treated him with great partiality.

Left an orphan before he was ten years of age he was forthwith adopted by his uncle, Lord Munro, of Ardmore, a bachelor well on in the forties, and as that nobleman was gifted with an intense aversion to the fair sex in general, Master Forrester's chance of succeeding to an earldom seemed well-nigh a certainty.

He was a clever boy, and made his mark at Eton, and later on took honours at Oxford. Still, when he entered the world of fashion it must be confessed some of the favour shown him was due to his connection with Lord Munro, not merely to his handsome, earnest face, and courtly manners.

He fell in love at five-and-twenty with the beauty of the season, who felt (or professed to feel) a reciprocal passion, and then the over-fed Lord Munro, applied to by the beauty's father to state his intentions regarding his nephew, said he should continue Guy's allowance as long as he lived, and leave him by will a sum calculated to produce a similar amount; but as for declaring him the sole heir of the estates that was impossible, since he himself was on the point of marriage, and expected to be a bridegroom in a few weeks.

The news was like a firebrand, and the commotion it excited akin to an explosion of gunpowder.

Most people said Guy Forrester had been hardly dealt by; others averred that at sixty a man had a right to marry if he pleased, and that two thousand a year was a handsome provision for a nephew.

Some suggested this sum and his patrimony formed no unsuitable provision for a penniless bride; but beauty's father thought differently, and beauty herself declared she should be miserable on small means; so Guy was taught pretty plainly the difference between his future and his past, and within a week of Lord Munro's matrimonial intentions being announced had been jilted by the syren he worshipped.

Then came the dark page of his life—the time he never looked back to without regret. He shook himself free from all his old friends; he renounced even those who would have been true to him in adversity, and plunged into every species of dissipation.

The poor young fellow was reckless with misery—he seemed utterly desperate. He gambled, speculated madly, threw money away as though he had been a millionaire, and in six months' time was on the point of beggary.

The Honourable Emmeline who had jilted him in May, was a bride in July, and before November Guy stood face to face with ruin. He owed more than he had the slightest chance of paying.

His debts amounted to thirty thousand pounds, his sole assets consisted of a little property in Surrey, worth, perhaps, one-sixth of his liabilities, and the furniture and ornaments of the bachelor rooms in Clarges-street he had occupied ever since he left Oxford. His allowance from the Earl had ceased at once when his uncle heard of his career.

Thirty thousand pounds!

The figures seemed burnt into Guy's brain, and the greater part of the money was needed for what people term "debts of honour." It seemed to the luckless young man he had better end his days with a revolver, for he could think of no refuge but death from his creditors.

He felt he could not survive the dishonour that must fall on his name if these liabilities remained unsatisfied.

It was a November day, dark and gloomy, as the eleventh month of the year so often is. The rain fell in a fierce downpour; the sky was a dull leaden grey, the atmosphere so thick and murky that, though not four o'clock in the afternoon, many people had drawn their blinds and lighted up, glad to shut out the gloomy prospect of the outside world.

Guy was not of these. His servant had brought in lights, and turned to draw down the blinds, but his master motioned him away.

Mr. Forrester sat by the window: his eyes rivetted on the wet pavements and occasional passers-by.

There was one object in his grave, sad scrutiny. He had almost made up his mind that night should be his last. It was a farewell look he was taking at the world which had once seemed to him so bright and joyous.

"He might have written," thought the prodigal, his mind dwelling on his unanswered appeal to the Earl of Munro. "Even if he refused to help me he might have written."

A dead silence reigned around. Poor Guy continued his musings, speaking his thoughts aloud almost unconsciously.

"That was all a mistake, a miserable blunder. I see it all now. No woman was worth a man going to the dogs. What does she care for my ruin? The truest way of punishing her for her perfidy would have been to raise myself to a position far above that of the man she has married—to let her see that had she only been faithful to her promise I could have given her a nobler fortune than the one boasted by Mr. Septimus Jenkins!"

His dark eyes glowed with earnestness; for a moment a brief triumph lighted up his face. He seemed to see himself standing on the dizzy pinnacle of success. He had talents, and was capable of great things. Who knew where ambition might not land him? And then the smile faded; he remembered unless thirty thousand pounds were forthcoming within three days his name was branded as a defaulter; he could never hold up his head again.

"Six months," he muttered bitterly. "Six months of folly in exchange for a man's whole life!"

He was interrupted; his servant once more came in, this time with a card in his hand.

"The gentleman insisted on my bringing you this, sir, though I told him you could not be disturbed."

Guy started. The card bore the name of an old lawyer, to whom he had frequently resorted for money at the beginning of his downward career. To do Mr. Smith justice, he had not reduced Mr. Forrester to his present state. Months ago he had frankly told the young man he was going to ruin headlong, and half out of offence, half from a kind of shame, Guy had avoided him persistently from that day.

He had no idea what could have brought Mr. Smith to Clarges-street on this particular afternoon. He had half a mind to send him about his business, but he was inexpressibly dull and desponding. It would be something to be roused to think of something other than his own debts, even for a few minutes.

"You can show him in, Hawkins."

There entered a small, wizened-looking man, who was seventy, and looked it, in spite of a glossy brown wig and gold-rimmed eyeglass. Jabez Smith had not a bad face, as faces go: his skin was dry and shrivelled as one of his own parchments; his eyes small and beadlike; the brow and lashes almost imperceptible; a shrewd, clever man of business, and one spoken of among his own set as having laid by a "pretty penny." A man who, if a trifle hard sometimes in business matters, had never done a dishonorable action; who lived sparingly, almost parsimoniously, and devoted all his thoughts and energies to one great aim, one cherished project.

"You are surprised to see me, Mr. Forrester!" he said, when he had taken in every detail of the scene, even to a couple of pistols, which lay rather conspicuously on a side table. "But I assure you my call is on business—purely business."

"Then I can't imagine who the business concerns," was our hero's abrupt reply.

"Yourself—and another."

Guy shrugged his shoulders.

"I will ask you to be brief, Mr. Smith. I am not in the mood for trifling, and," here he glanced at the pistols, "I have a great deal of worry just now."

"Precisely," said the little man, rubbing his hands mechanically. "Precisely, that's why I'm here. You'll excuse me, Mr. Forrester, but I've heard you're in money difficulties."

"I'm ruined," returned Guy quietly. "I prefer plain speaking, please."

"Not so bad as that, I hope."

"Every jot. I have to pay thirty thousand pounds in three days' time. I possess, perhaps ten; and when you gave up my affairs in the summer you told me it was impossible to raise another five thousand at any cost."

"But your friends—"

"Friends!" scornfully. "I haven't got any. My butterfly acquaintance fled at the approach of trouble; my uncle—whose doing it is partly I'm in my present case—doesn't even condescend to answer my letters."

"Just so. Thirty thousand pounds, I think you named as the extent of your liabilities. Now, supposing these were paid, what would be your plans, Mr. Forrester? Should you continue your present life?"

"What's the good of supposing a miracle! Well, since you will ask the question—no, I shouldn't. I should go abroad, and work till I made a position. Mrs. Septimus Jenkins might bitterly regret she had not waited to share. I should remember no woman is worth a man's going to the dogs for her loss, and set my shoulder to the wheel to win for myself a home worthy one of the Forresters of Ardmore."

"Just so! just so" (this was the lawyer's favourite formula). "A most praiseworthy determination. I hope I may live to see it carried out."

Guy stared at him.

"Are you dreaming? Don't you remember all this is purely imaginary? My programme is of what I should do if I had thirty thousand pounds."

"Just so."

"And I haven't thirty thousand pence."

"But you can have. I am not a rich man,



"SEP, WHAT CAN YOU MEAN? YOU SPEAK AS THOUGH WE WERE RUINED," SAID MRS. JENKINS, WITH SOME SHOW OF CONCERN.

as people like Lord Munro count wealth, but I have saved money. I am prepared to hand over forty thousand pounds to you to-morrow upon three conditions!"

"You would be a fool. I have no security to offer."

"I do not require security. Will you hear my conditions, Mr. Forrester. But first let me ask you a question. Are you cured of your infatuation for Mrs. Jenkins?"

"She took a pretty effectual means of curing me, didn't she?"

"But are you liable to a relapse?"

"I don't understand."

"I will make my meaning plainer. If Mrs. Jenkins became a widow, would you consent to overlook her passing breach of faith?"

"Not if she were the only woman in the world—not if she were hung with ropes of pearls!"

"Just so. All is over between you then; even if Jenkins were as dead as a door-nail?"

"Emphatically so."

Mr. Smith smiled, and again performed miracles of invisible laundry work with his long, bony hands.

"Then, Mr. Forrester, the matter lies in a nutshell. Will you shake yourself free of all your present surroundings and go abroad? Will you take up some calling worthy your rank, and work hard at it?"

"Hitherto your conditions sound marvelously easy. They simply lay down the programme I should have planned for myself. Now let me hear the last."

The little lawyer rose and tried the door, to make sure it was fastened, then he warmed his thin hands at the fire as he

passed it. Guy was terribly impatient. To him it seemed almost an hour instead of a few brief seconds before Mr. Smith unfolded his third condition.

Then a blank silence followed.

"I can't understand you," said Guy, after a pause; "it seems to me incredible you should wish for such a thing!"

"I do wish it."

"Do you know I haven't a rap in the world, that my uncle has stopped even my allowance?"

"I know all that."

"And you must have heard I was head-over-heels in love with the present Mrs. Jenkins?"

"I have your own word that is a thing of the past."

"True; but—"

"But what?"

"I can form no idea why you wish this absurd arrangement. Not only am I penniless now, but I have no prospects. My uncle is a happy Benedict; he may have a dozen children to keep me out of Ardmore."

"Just so."

"And yet you wish it. You are willing to throw away thirty thousand pounds for nothing."

"Forty thousand pounds," corrected Mr. Smith. "You can't begin life in a foreign country penniless."

"And your object? You can't have a very exalted opinion of my character."

"You are not a strong man yet," said the lawyer, slowly; "but you will become one. This is a crisis in your life. You will build a noble fame on the ashes of your passion."

"Shall I?"

"You are rash and thoughtless, but you

are a man of honour, and you will never break your word or ill-treat any being too weak and helpless to defend itself. I repeat my offer, Mr. Forrester; agree to my conditions, and forty thousand pounds are ready for you to-morrow."

"And after—shall you publish the business?"

Jabez Smith looked surprised.

"Assuredly not. You will go abroad and make your fortune. For seven years you shall be completely free from all recollection of this—business. For seven years you shall never be troubled by any communication with me. At the end of that time I shall expect you to return, if not a rich man, at least one possessing moderate competency and an unspotted name."

Guy Forrester paced up and down the room like some wild animal confined in a cage all too small in limits, all too narrow. Suddenly he stopped his halt, and put out his hand to his visitor.

"I accept your offer," he said slowly, "I think you are mad to make it, but the money will be my salvation and for the rest I hope you will not find me unworthy of your trust!"

"Agreed. I live at Denmark Hill, Mr. Forrester, Acacia Lodge. If you will call at three o'clock to-morrow afternoon everything shall be ready, I will see you are not detained half-an-hour, and the money shall be handed over to you in Bank of England notes. Good-day."

He was gone.

Guy sat down and wondered if it was all a dream! Then he rose, shut the pistols in their case, and locked it in his writing-table drawer.

"Saved!" he muttered to himself. "Saved, but at what a cost! Poor old Smith, he must

So do the right thing and pass this news on to your friends.

be mad, and yet there's something almost pathetic in the faith he has in me. Helgho! To think that to-morrow I shall be a free man!"

He did not go to the theatre; he did not seek out any gay companions to make the evening pass cheerfully for him. He occupied himself with sorting various newspapers and preparing a compact list of all the debts so soon to be paid—it was not a disagreeable task.

"And then to get out of this!" he breathed, as one shaking off a great oppression. "But how? Old Smith talked of 'an honest calling,' and I won't disappoint the old fellow. Besides, I'd sworn to myself before he came that if ever I got another chance I'd do something to shed credit on my name yet. Well, the chance has come!"

He wrote two letters before he went to bed, both to friends of other days—friends whom his own folly rather than his change of fortune had made him lose sight of. One was his godfather, a K.C.B., great in diplomacy and such-like pursuits, the other his college chum, now a dashing young officer in His Majesty's Service.

Guy rose the next day with a strange sense of relief! The whole world had seemed to have grown fair once more. Hawkins, who had served the young man ever since he left college, and who had been a retainer at Ardmore Castle, felt certain Lord Munro had relented.

"And have you heard from the Earl, sir, if I may make bold to ask?" he said, when Guy had ordered his private cab to be round noon after two o'clock.

Mr. Forrester shook his head.

"I think Lord Munro has washed his hands of me. It doesn't matter, Hawkins. You'll see I can keep my head above water without him."

It was a long drive to Denmark Hill, and Guy's Jehu, who was not acquainted with the locality, had a great deal of difficulty in finding Acacia Lodge; but, fortunately, Mr. Forrester had allowed himself plenty of time, and the clock struck three precisely as a neat parlour-maid ushered him into Mr. Smith's study.

"You are punctual, sir," said the lawyer, not displeased at his precision. "I conclude I may consider your presence here a proof your decision is unaltered?"

"Entirely so."

Mr. Smith handed Guy a formidable-looking parchment, well covered with round, legal characters. Mr. Forrester read it through slowly, and then affixed his signature.

"All is perfectly ready," said the lawyer, equably. "Perhaps we had better proceed with the rest of the business—it will not take long!"

Guy bowed rather stiffly in assent.

The "rest of the business" took something under twenty minutes; then Mr. Forrester had a second brief *like-a-battle* with Jabez Smith, who handed him a small pocket-book well lined with Bank of England notes.

"You will remember our agreement."

"I will. I leave England within a week, and I hope to carve my way to fortune, so that you may feel your trust was not misplaced."

"I am not afraid."

"And you adhere to your first wish—you would not care to hear from me now and then—to be kept, as it were, cognizant of my doings?"

Jabez shook his head.

"I prefer not to hear from you. I would rather our intercourse should cease entirely for seven years; unless—"

"Pray speak freely."

"I am an old man. If I should die before the seven years are out, I should like you to remember how I trusted you."

This was vague, but Guy seemed perfectly to understand.

"If your health should fail, be sure a line would recall me at any time; and now I will say good-bye."

His whole visit to Acacia Lodge took under an hour. He drove back to town with a strangely serious face for a man who has just received forty thousand pounds, when the day before ruin stared him in the face.

A letter was lying on the table in Clarges-street, directed in his godfather's well-known hand.

"Dear old man!" muttered Guy; "I wish I had not shunned him; I do believe he has written by return of post."

Sir Joshua Marton had done something more—he had sent an answer to Guy's appeal by a private messenger.

"MY DEAR BOY,—I always thought your uncle did you an injustice in marrying at his time of life, and I always wanted to help you to get over it, only, till you woke up from your first disappointment, I really had no idea how to set about it. If you are really willing to expatriate yourself, and work for your living, I am going out to the Pacific next month as the Governor of the Maryland Islands. My private secretary has just died of apoplexy, and I have much pleasure in offering you the vacant post. The salary is eight hundred, and there is no doubt it will lead to something better. It may sound rather a come down for the heir of Ardmore; but colonial life will be a change for you, and brighten you up after your late disappointments. Anyway, unless you have something better in view, I think you will do wisely to cast in your lot with us. Lady Marton begs me to say you will have a warm welcome at Government House, and of course will make your home with us. If you at all consider my proposal, you had better come to dinner, and talk things over. —Your affectionate godfather,

"JOSHUA MARTON."

"I am provided for," said Guy to himself, with a half smile. "I never heard of Maryland Islands in my life, and I daresay they're beyond the pale of civilisation, but Sir Joshua and Lady Marton would make a barn-accorn refined and homelike. I always felt the dear old man would do his best for me, but I never dreamed of this;" and, catching up his hat, he walked round to the Langham at once.

Sir Joshua and his wife had mourned very sadly over their godson's misfortunes, and the vagaries which followed; but the Baronet never attempted to seek out Guy and preach prudence to him.

"The lad must have his fling, Susan," he observed to his wife; "he'll settle down all the better for it afterwards, and when a young fellow's half mad with disappointment it's no use to try and make him bear reason; when he's had his fling, or when he's down on his luck, he'll remember we're his friends. Till then, I'd rather let him alone."

And now the Baronet's prophecy was fulfilled.

Guy had remembered his friends, and Sir Joshua extended a helping hand to him right willingly.

It was a very pleasant evening the young man spent with the Martons: the voyage, the outfit, Maryland Islands, and their customs, all provided plenty of scope for conversation. It was only when Lady Marton, with rather a meaning glance at her husband, had retired, that Sir Joshua touched on what he felt was an awkward subject.

"We heard Lord Munro had stopped your allowance, Guy; and very shabby I thought it."

"I think there was some excuse for him," said Mr. Forrester, with a dusky flush. "I have been going the pace rather lately, Sir Joshua."

"So we heard. And, my boy, what are you going to do about it?"

"Oh! I'll turn over a new leaf, Sir Joshua. I'm tired of idling, and I mean to be as steady as time."

"But the debts, my dear lad, they must be paid sooner or later; that's what I'm afraid, that you've hung a millstone of liabilities round your neck."

"I have. But I mean to pay them; the money is all ready, Sir Joshua. By this time to-morrow I trust I shall not owe a half-penny."

"But we heard it was thousands."

"Thirty thousand."

"And you talk of paying it?"

"I have forty thousand advanced to me that I may clear myself from all entanglements, and start in my new life as a free man."

"Forty thousand! your uncle?—"

"Oh, dear, no! He didn't even trouble to answer my application; it was—a friend."

Sir Joshua looked at him keenly.

"You never won it at cards?"

"I never won a sovereign at cards or on the turf in my life. I have tried both forms of speculation, but—invariably lost."

"Well, it sounds wonderful!"

"It is quite true. I shall start for Maryland Islands a free and unembarrassed man."

"But not a heartwhole one. That jade treated you abominably, Guy."

"I would rather you not discuss her."

"Then you haven't got over it."

"Perfectly."

"There are heaps of pretty girls in the Islands. My lady must give a ball or two at Government House, and see if we can't find a face fair enough to drive the syren's from your memory."

"Please don't. I mean I should like the balls of all things; but I don't ever mean to go in for a love affair again."

"My dear boy, you can't keep that up! At five-and-twenty a man can't condemn himself to a lonely life just because one particular woman has been false."

Guy smiled, half cynically.

"I don't mind telling you, Sir Joshua, I have quite made up my mind. I have parted company with such follies as love-making and sentiment for ever."

"It won't last, my boy."

Mr. Forrester was very busy the next day in settling the many claims on his purse. It is wonderful how quickly you can get through work of this kind, provided always you have plenty of money. Before daylight had ended a very large hole had been made in Jabez Smith's advance, and of the heavy sum deposited in the Union Bank only a few thousands remained.

Hawkins, the faithful, had been informed of his master's future destination, and expressed his willingness to accompany him.

"Provided, on course, sir, I can dress as I please. I have heard in some of them outlandish climates folks go about in blankets. I couldn't come down to that; besides, if it's a hot place the costume would be oppressive."

Guy smothered a laugh, and declared to the devoted henchman he had also a sincere aversion to appearing in a blanket.

"We'll stick to European costume, Hawkins, even if we're the only two respectably-dressed people in the place."

"That's right, sir," said Hawkins, approvingly. "I couldn't fancy myself in a blanket."

There was another surprise in store for Guy Forrester. About an hour after Hawkins's mind had been set at rest on the blanket question he appeared brimming over with importance.

"Here's Lord Munro, sir."

The peer, who had not seen his nephew since his own nuptials, seemed a little doubtful of his reception.

"We were travelling from place to place, you see, Guy, and I only got your letter two days ago. I left my wife at Nice, and rushed back to England as fast as I could. I'm afraid things are in a bad way with you, my boy."

"They were, indeed," said Guy, gravely.

"Two nights ago I had taken out my pistols, and resolved that death was better than dishonour; but I see now that was a fool's sentiment."

"And your debts?"

Guy smiled.

"I've paid them."

"You've paid them!"

"There may be a trifling account or two not sent in; but every bill in my possession is reconciled."

"Did you discover a gold mine?"

"Not precisely."

"You are mysterious, Guy."

"Look here, uncle," and Mr. Forrester's gravity returned, "I will answer all the questions I can; but I don't like to talk on this subject. My debts are paid in full, and I came by the money honestly; it was not begged, borrowed, or stolen. I didn't win it by gambling."

Lord Munro looked perplexed.

"I meant to help you, Guy. I assure you I rushed back to England meaning to do all in my power to give you a fresh start."

"I am sure you did; but I rather fancy, my lord, the start is made."

"How?"

"I'm going out to the Pacific next month as Sir Joshua Marton's private secretary. He's been appointed governor of the Maryland Islands."

"Did he pay your debts, Guy?"

"No, he didn't—(steer clear of that subject please, uncle); but he's a dear old man. I'm to have eight hundred a year, besides a home at Government House."

"And your allowance?" put in the Earl.

"Of course I shall continue that."

"I can manage very well without it."

"I never meant you to lose it; only I heard such strange rumours of your doings I thought it wise to stop it for a time."

"I daresay you heard no more than the truth. It wasn't my fault I didn't go to ruin headlong. The lovely Emmeline did her best to send me there."

"I know; and yet, Guy, I believe you'll live to thank me for saving you from her. That girl was false to the very core."

"I daresay. She's Mrs. Jenkins now, and I don't think we need trouble about her."

"I have always heard colonial girls are very pretty," said the Earl, rather eagerly. "Perhaps you may meet with one fair enough to console you."

Guy shrugged his shoulders.

"You are nearly as bad as Sir Joshua. He made the self-same remark. I told him I had done with folly."

"You are young yet," said the bridegroom of sixty; "but I assure you, Guy, marriage is the happiest state."

"I am glad you find it so. How is my aunt?" with a half-smile.

"Very well. I wish you could make her acquaintance, Guy!"

"I hope to enjoy that pleasure when I come back from Maryland Islands. By-the-way, I wonder how many there are of them, and which particular one I'm supposed to

inhabit. It's funny to speak of yourself as residing on 'Islands,' isn't it?"

"Guy," said Lord Munro, looking at him gravely, "I can't make you out!"

"Why not?"

"Your letter made me think you in a state of utter dejection; but you seem cheerful-neer personified."

"Remember, uncle, that letter was written a week ago. Only the day before yesterday I was as dejected as you could have imagined; now I confess I am in the best of spirits."

"And you like the idea of your exile?"

"Prodigiously; I want a thorough change, and it seems to me I'm going to get it."

Lord Munro felt bewildered; he had always been fond of Guy, and proud of him, too, but he had never thought him capable of great exertion or self-denial, yet here was the lad, with no particular object to spur him on, bravely relinquishing all the pleasures of London life, and giving up country society and friends to travel eight thousand miles, and fill a subordinate position in a colony so small and remote that its name even was left out entirely by many an atlas.

"I hope you don't bear malice, Guy," he said at last, a little sheepishly. "I know I had kept single so long you had a right, so to say, to count on being my heir; but—"

"But you had a perfect right to marry if you pleased," returned Guy, pleasantly; "and to assure you I bear no malice, if you and Lady Munro send me an invitation I will come and stay at Ardmore when I return to England."

"Agreed," said the peer. The two men shook hands with unusual warmth before they parted, and about three weeks later the Earl read that the good ship *Arethusa*, had sailed for the Pacific, having on board his Excellency the Governor-General of Maryland Islands, Lady Marton and suite.

"I suppose Guy's included in the suite," said Lord Munro, when he read the brief paragraph to his wife. "I wish there had been a Miss Marton, Kathleen."

Lady Munro smiled.

"I can guess why."

"To be sure. It is a long voyage; the lad would have been sure to fall in love, and then Guy would have been married as soon as they reached Maryland."

Lord Munro hardly read his nephew aright when he planned out his future so minutely. There was no Miss Marton. In that one particular he was correct; but had there been half-a-dozen it would have made not the least difference to Guy Forrester. He was perfectly sincere when he told his uncle he had no intention of committing matrimony.

CHAPTER I.

It was June—the month of roses, the time when England is at its loveliest—early June, when the spring flowers are not all gone, when the freshness lingers on the green leaves of the trees, and the innocence and artlessness has not been swept quite away from the hearts of society's youngest daughters; June, when the London season has barely reached its height, and there is hope still left in the breasts of mothers of poverty-stricken beauties; June, when the best parts of the season, all often still uncaught, and there is a delicious sense of vagueness about what the next six weeks may bring forth.

It promised to be a most brilliant year. Several foreign royalties were in London, and many were the fêtes and festivities given in their honour. The votaries of fashion had a gay time of it, and could

display their newest toilettes and most recent purchases to hosts of admiring eyes, and yet the mistress of a bijou residence in Mayfair did not seem to be in particularly buoyant spirits, and ennui, distaste, and regret were written plainly on the features of what had once been a face of dazzling prettiness.

Mrs. Jenkins, wife of a cotton lord, presumably with more money than she knew what to do with, ought to have found the London season a very brilliant affair, but she did not. Money will always command a certain consideration; it will enable its possessor to be in society, but it cannot convey the magic gift of being of society—a very different thing, as Emmeline Jenkins was finding out most truly.

Married to a husband whose one attraction for her had been his wealth, her domestic felicity left much to be desired; and yet she, being one of those little-minded women who can dispense with matrimonial happiness, Emmeline would have been perfectly content had only the world paid her what she deemed a proper amount of attention.

As it was, she was peevish, regretful, dissatisfied; she had lost her bloom and vivacity, the first glory of youth had left her, and the years had added no mature matronly charm to take its place.

Mrs. Jenkins at this time was twenty-eight. Perpetual repining had given a peevish expression to the face which seven years before had been soft and smooth as a child's, the fair hair had lost its golden sheen and was now a dull flaxen. A little stouter, a trifle coarser, with most gorgeous toilettes succeeding the youthful white draperies of her girlish days, Emmeline looked her full age and even more.

This was not a face on which your eyes willingly rested long. Her expression marred what charms remained to it; you seemed to know by instinct her home was not a happy one, and to pity the man who called her wife, not that he needed much pity.

The Jenkins' were rich enough to lead their lives apart, and they led them so. Save at an entertainment in his own house it was rare enough to see Septimus in his wife's company. The breach between them grew wider as the years went on, and there were no baby fingers to draw the ill-assorted pair nearer to each other.

Mrs. Jenkins might be pardoned her start of astonishment when her husband suddenly entered her boudoir. For him to seek her at four o'clock on a June afternoon had in it something of strangeness.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked, with a slight lifting of her eyebrows.

He looked at her keenly. With a different wife Septimus Jenkins would have been a better husband. He was not a gentleman, but that was his chief drawback; he had more heart a hundred times than the woman who had married him for his money.

"I don't think I feel well, Emmie."

She started. It was years since he had called her by that name. She looked at him; certainly he was white and wan, with a strange, tired expression about his eyes.

"I will send for the doctor," she said, turning to ring the bell. "It will be most provoking if you are ill! You know we have visitors to dinner."

"They must be put off," he began; then more bitterly, "But there will be no need; they'll fly from a sinking ship."

"Sep, what can you mean? You speak as though we were ruined."

"That's just it, Emmie, ruin."

"But—"

"That agent. I never trusted him, but you said it was vulgar to look after one's own business. A telegram's just come

It is an exceptionally well-written and telling story.

he's absconded with a hundred thousand pounds in gold."

"He must be pursued, caught. Oh! it will be a tiresome job, but it must be done. I can't understand how you can sit there with your hands folded while things are in such danger. You ought to be in Manchester now!"

"Ought I?" he asked absently. "But I feel ill, Emmie. Have you nothing better to tell me than that, no single word of sympathy?"

"I am sorry, very sorry."

"Aye, for the luxuries you will lose, not for the good old name which will be covered with dishonour. You don't know what I feel; you can't understand how a tradesman loves his credit, how it's more to him than all else. If that goes, Emmie, I shall never hold up my head again."

"And yet you sit there and make no effort to pursue the thief. Septimus, I wonder at you."

"Yes," he said faintly, "I wonder at myself. Only I seem to have lost all hope, all energy. The ship's sinking, Emmie, and I feel content to go down with her. I'm tired of the voyage."

Terrified by his words and his strange manner, Emmeline rang the bell and sent in hot haste for the doctor. Meanwhile, her husband lay back, his eyes closed as though in slumber, and she sat by him motionless.

"He is tired out," thought the wife to herself. "A good rest will do wonders for him. Still I am glad I sent for Dr. Edwards. I don't like his manner; it is so strange!"

Quite an hour she sat there watching him before the doctor arrived. He gave one look at the still, calm figure of poor Septimus, and then said sternly to Mrs. Jenkins,—

"How long has he been like this?"

Emmeline was rather awed by his tone, but she answered frankly, though her eyes quailed beneath the condemnation written on the doctor's face. Half in self-excuse she added,—

"I kept the room quiet on purpose he should not be disturbed, for I thought the rest would do him so much good."

The old man looked at her half in pity, half in angry scorn, at her ignorance.

"Rest!" he cried, indignantly, "do you mean to say you thought he was asleep?"

"Yes," helplessly. "Isn't he?"

"He is in a state of insensibility, brought on by some severe mental shock. Strong restoratives ought to have been applied at once!"

They were applied then, but it was long before they took effect. Dr. Edsor saw his patient undressed and put to bed; then, after promising to send a professional nurse, he gave a sharp injunction to Mrs. Jenkins,—

"Remember, he is not to be troubled with any thoughts of business unless you want to kill him outright. His mind must be kept easy."

"I will remember."

The doctor departed, and she crept back to the sick room. She did not love the man who lay there, but he was her husband; his lot was linked to hers; from him came all the luxuries she enjoyed. She had not been a good wife to him, but she did not want to neglect him in sickness.

"Emmeline,"

"I thought you were asleep?"

"No; the pain in my head is too bad. Emmie, I want to speak to you; come and sit down close to me, dear."

He had not called her "dear" for years. The word thrilled her through and through.

"But the doctor said you were not to talk."

Septimus half smiled.

"I must disobey him. Emmie, do you recollect what I was telling you a while ago?"

"Perfectly."

"You know, then, we are going to be poor."

She interrupted him.

"Oh, no! The agent will be found and the money recovered, I won't have you full of such gloomy things, Sep."

He half smiled.

"My dear, you must let me finish. If the man is not found I fear there will be a very scanty provision for you when I am gone."

"But you are not going to die."

He let the assertion pass unchallenged.

"I never insured my life. As you know, I was a rich man, and our family so often dying at thirty made the companies demand a premium I thought absurdly heavy; besides, I was a rich man, and it seemed a ridiculous precaution; but I wish now I had done it for your sake."

Emmeline was silent. She felt too stunned for words; her husband spoke as though death was very near.

"There was no settlement on you. I made a will, leaving you all I had, and I used to think if anything happened to me, you would be one of the richest widows in England; but that's all altered now."

"Sep, I wish you wouldn't talk so."

"Shall you be sorry? Do you think you'll miss me just a little, Emmie?"

The tears rained down her face. She was a weak woman—a selfish, and a narrow-minded one; but she was not wholly bad, and a wild regret filled her at these wistful words.

"Of course, I should miss you, Septimus, but you are not going to leave me."

He smiled.

"Hold my hand, dear!" he said, feebly. "It all feels dark and cold, and the ship is sinking. It seems to me, Emmie, I am going down with her."

And he did. Whether it was the sudden shock of his misfortunes coming on a naturally weak constitution, or the pride of his commercial success, unable to bear the loss of his fortune, none can say; but the newspapers which chronicled the failure of the great Manchester firm of Jenkins and Co. also announced the death of the senior partner.

He was buried in the old north-country burial ground where his father lay, and all his creditors were paid in full; his lawyers and the faithful clerk, whose place in the firm was described by the "Co.," managed this. No human creature could come forward and prove they had lost money by Septimus Jenkins. All his debts were paid in full, but the bijou residence had to be given up and its contents brought to the hammer; the lovely ornaments, the bric-a-brac, that had been so dear to Emmeline, passed to other hands.

Before the season was over she knew her fate. A small sum, sufficient, if judiciously invested, to bring in a hundred a year, was all that remained of the fortune for which she had sold herself. She was destined to make far closer acquaintance with narrow means than if seven years before she had been true to her plighted word, and married Guy Forrester and his modest allowance from his uncle.

She had been false to love, honour, truth, and the dictates of her own heart. And what had she gained by it? Nearly seven years of luxury, in which she knew she was despised by all women more noble than herself—seven years of fine clothes, gaiety

and self-indulgence, and now a blank, desolate widowhood, and an income which was barely as much as (counting perquisites), she had paid her maid.

"I need not have blighted two lives," she muttered to herself one day, when she thought of all this. "I have not gained much."

She was staying with her younger sister, the wife of a struggling barrister. Mrs. Carlyle had been a girl in the school-room when Guy Forrester wooed her sister, but she had been quite old enough to despise Emmeline for her cruel perfidy; and when, two years later, her own turn came, and her father was enraged at the idea of her wedding a man whose private means were a mere trifle, she had held her own firmly.

"I shall marry Percy Carlyle or nobody," she told her father and sister. "And as it might be troublesome to you, papa, if you had to keep me always, I really think you had better let me have my own way."

She had it, and was now a blithe little matron of four years' standing. She and her husband lived at Dulwich in what Emmeline called genteel poverty; but Mrs. Carlyle considered the pretty suburban home, with two maids and a page, the extreme of luxury. When a nursery had to be established the page was given up, and though the nursery was added to every year, Mr. Carlyle's income increased in proportion to his family, and Kate often spoke with actual pity of her wealthy sister.

There was little intercourse between them. Mrs. Carlyle had neither time nor taste for the dissipation and gaieties into which Emmeline plunged; but when the time came she and her husband were prompt with their sympathy.

"I should like to ask Emmeline here for three months," said Kate to her husband.

"Should you mind, Percy?"

"Hadn't you better invite her on a visit, and say nothing of its duration?"

Mrs. Carlyle shook her head.

"In three months' time Emmie will know her position exactly. I shouldn't like to have her with us always, and I couldn't bear to tell her so. So I think my plan is best."

And it was truest kindness. Twelve weeks would surely be sufficient for Mrs. Jenkins to decide her future plans, and it was better she should know that for that time she was a welcome guest than to go on from week to week, uncertain of her tenure.

Kate arranged it very simply.

"You must come to us at once," she told the poor young widow. "We are going to stay with Percy's people in Scotland until September, but till then I won't let you make your home anywhere but with me."

Long before the three months were over Mr. Carlyle rejoiced at his wife's forethought. Mrs. Jenkins was a most trying addition to their household; and but for the thought the second week in September would see them free of her, he could not have treated Emmeline with the perfect courtesy he did, although the refined, simple home was far superior to anything she could expect to own henceforward. She was never tired of drawing comparisons between it and Mayfair, and she made Kate wait on her more like a servant than a hostess.

"This can't go on, Kitty," said the barrister, when he returned home late from a judicial dinner, to find his wife putting fresh crepe frills on her sister's dress.

"I won't have you made a slave of!"

"In a month we shall be in Scotland," re-

turned Kate, smiling. "And I shall not invite Emmeline to stay with us again for a long while."

Mr. Carlyle looked embarrassed.

"I suppose she knows."

"Knows what, dear?"

"That she is not included in the Scotch project. Eh, Katy!"

"Yes," Mrs. Carlyle actually blushed for her sister. "I thought I had better tell her plainly your mother did not care for strangers. She offered to keep house for us here, but I said we always shut up the villa, and had one of your clerks down to sleep in it for protection. I don't think she liked it, Percy."

"What does she mean to do?"

"I don't know. She has just had her money for the half-year. I wish it had been paid quarterly. Emmeline thinks herself quite rich with fifty pounds in her purse. She forgets it has to last till next Christmas."

"Of all the women I ever saw she seems the least fit to take care of herself. I don't want to say anything disrespectful to poor Jenkins, but the most sensible thing she could do would be to marry again."

"I think she will."

The barrister opened his eyes.

"You don't mean she has seen anyone already? You can't mean that, Katy?"

Katy shook her head.

"There was someone she cared for long ago, but he was poor. Still, you know, what she called poverty then she would think riches now."

"But the gentleman may have changed his mind."

"I don't think so. He was desperate at first, and almost ruined himself for her sake. Then some relation paid his debts, and he went out to some unheard-of place to seek his fortune."

"When?"

"Percy!"

"My dear, I don't see how this helps us unless we pack up Mrs. Jenkins in a parcel, label her 'this side upwards, with care,' and despatch the interesting gift to the gentleman at the unheard-of place, if you happen to know his name!"

"I do know it, and I have sent to him."

"Katy!"

The tone was not exactly of approval.

"I don't mean I wrote to him. I just sent him a newspaper with the announcement of poor Sep's death."

"Oh!"

"Was it very wrong, Percy? But it couldn't be, for you are laughing."

"I am laughing at the sublimity of your faith in man's constancy, my dear. Here's a poor fellow heartlessly jilted seven years ago, and you expect him to be perfectly ready to come back to his allegiance and marry the penniless widow of the man who supplanted him!"

"It would be very nice!"

"Like the third volume in a novel, eh! Who was the gentleman—you haven't told me that yet?"

"Guy Forrester."

"Nephew of Lord Munro! You don't mean it. Emmeline knew him once?"

"Did you never hear of it?"

"I was abroad the last five years before I met you, but I remember Forrester perfectly. He was a freshman at Oxford just as I was leaving, and one of the best fellows going. I should be proud of him for a brother-in-law."

"You see, when Lord Munro married he lost his expectations."

"And emigrated?"

"Not exactly. He is private secretary to the Governor of one of the colonies."

"Which one?"

"Maryland Islands."

Mr. Carlyle sought out a fashionable friend, and another who was connected with the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The result was that he called his wife into his study when he got home, and said—

"You must be a witch, Katy. Forrester is coming home—is probably on his way now."

Mrs. Carlyle's eyes flashed.

"He must have started the moment he got my piece of news."

"It looks like it, and he is a very great man. It seems he discovered some incipient rebellion, and quashed it. He will be invited to Windsor, and thanked by the King. Then it is rumoured he is the author whose books have won such fame under the nom de plume of Golden Thread. In short, young lady, he will be one of the lions of the day."

"May I tell Emmeline?"

"It can't do any harm."

Mrs. Jenkins received the tidings with a flash of triumph in her eyes.

"I shall be a great lady yet," she said, passionately, "and then, perhaps, you and your husband will regret your inhospitality in turning me into the street. The Honourable Mrs. Forrester will be able to avenge her wrongs!"

It was not a kindly speech to make to the sister who had been so tender to her in her hour of trial and bereavement; but it satisfied Katy on one point. Evidently Emmeline would not scorn Guy Forrester if he sued to her a second time; she would be as thankful to accept his hand as her sister would be to see it offered.

It remained to be proved, however, whether Guy meant to offer it.

(To be continued next week.)

The continuation of the thrilling romance, *GUY FORRESTER'S SECRET*, will appear next week, when will be made plain the reason of Guy Forrester's return to England and what part Mrs. Jenkins played in it.

TO-DAY.

Rise! for the day is passing,

And you lie dreaming on;

The others have buckled their armour,

And forth to the fight are gone;

A place in the ranks awaits you;

Each man has some part to play;

The Past and the Future are nothing,

In the face of the stern To-day.

Rise from your dreams of the Future,—

Of gaining some hard-fought field;

Of storming some airy fortress,

Or bidding some giant yield;

Your Future has deeds of glory,

Of honour (God grant it may!);

But your arm will never be stronger,

Or the need so great as To-day.

Rise! if the Past detains you,

Her sunshine and storms forget;

No chains so unworthy to hold you

As those of a vain regret;

Sad or bright, she is lifeless ever,

Cast her phantom arms away,

Nor look back, save to learn the lesson

Of a nobler strife To-day.

Rise! for the day is passing;

The sound that you scarcely hear

Is the enemy marching to battle—

Arise! for the foe is here!

Stay not to sharpen your weapons;

Or the hour will strike at last,

When, from dreams of a coming battle,

You may wake to find it past!

A GOLDEN DESTINY.

By the author of "Redeemed by Fate,"

"The Mistress of Lynwood," &c.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

The father of Harold, Viscount St. Croix, is anxious that he should take as his wife Ermentrude Seymour, niece of Sir Traviçe Leigh. Harold goes down to Woodleigh Court for the purpose of proposing to Ermentrude, and while screwing his courage up to the sticking point accidentally meets Irene Duval, the girl he befriended one night on the Embankment in London. Irene Duval is staying in an adjoining house that has the reputation of being haunted, and there Harold meets her while looking over the place. He finds himself getting more than interested in this young lady, and, at the same time, is mystified by her behaviour and sudden disappearance. Anthony Wyndham, the owner of Wyndham Abbey, and Sir Traviçe Leigh are neighbours. Marjorie Wyndham has fallen in love with Roy Fraser, a penniless architect, and keeps the news from her father. Suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, information reaches Mr. Wyndham that he is not the rightful owner of the Abbey but one Geoffrey Wyndham. This Geoffrey, while producing the best evidence that he is the person entitled to enjoy the Wyndham estates, is, in reality, an impostor. But so cleverly does he play the part that he succeeds in obtaining the consent of Marjorie to their marriage. Marjorie only agrees, however, on learning from her father that it is the one way in which they can retain the use of Wyndham Abbey.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE horror and surprise at Wyndham Abbey, on news of the murder being brought, may be better imagined than described. The Squire was, indeed, quite unnerved by it, and it was Marjorie who, preserving her presence of mind, had sent for Sir Traviçe.

As we have seen, he was unable to obey the summons, and Dale, instead of returning with him, brought the news of his accident.

Meanwhile a constable, named Manning, had ridden over from Blackminster, and visited the scene of the crime, where he found the murdered woman lying just as the maid had seen her first; for Dr. Wootton, on assuring himself that she was quite dead, would not have her moved, thinking that, perhaps, the position of the body might help in discovering how the fatal blow had been struck.

Evidently there had been no struggle, for there was only one wound, and the victim's face was as calm as if she had been merely sleeping.

Manning, who, it must be confessed, was rather proud of having such a "big thing" as a murder case entrusted to him, and who saw before him a long vista of honours and consequent advancement on account of the zeal and talent he resolved to display—made a strict examination of the premises, took possession of a little revolver he found in a cupboard in the sitting-room, and then had the little servant brought before him, and jotted down notes of what she said.

In effect this was little enough, and was really a repetition of what Dale, the keeper, had already repeated to Sir Traviçe.

She was a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked, intelligent girl, and, although not more than fifteen or sixteen, gave her evidence clearly, and with an evident desire to speak the truth.

She told how she had gone out the previous evening, and how her mistress had then seemed a little pale and excited; but otherwise there was nothing unusual in her appearance—how she had come back in the morning, and found the door unlocked; and, finally, how she had discovered her mistress lying dead in the little sitting-room, with the dagger by her side.

"Your name is Elizabeth Webber?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you have been in the deceased lady's service ever since she came to the neighbourhood?"

"Yes, sir."

"She was called Mrs Fanning?"

"Yes, sir," again.

"Do you know where she lived before she took this house?"

"I do not; but I think, from what she said, she must have been in London for some time."

"What did she say to make you think so?"

"Well, one day she was complaining of the cold, and she said she had no idea of what the English climate was like until she came to London."

"Is that all you can remember?"

"It is all I can remember just now, sir," answered poor Bessie, who was herself considerably shaken and upset by the death of her mistress. "Perhaps by-and-by, when I have recovered myself, I may be able to think of something more."

"All right, then, we'll leave that point. And now about the visitor. You say there was a visitor when you left. Did you see him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know his name?"

"No, I did not let him in either time that he came."

"Then he has been here more than once?"

"I have seen him here twice."

"And it maybe he has come oftener, when you have not seen him?"

"Very likely, sir."

"Can you describe him to me?"

Bessie thought for a moment before replying.

"I think so, sir. He was young and handsome—at least, rather good-looking. He had dark eyes and dark hair, and he was tall, and rather big. I don't think I can describe him any more."

"But you would know him again if you saw him?"

"Oh, yes! directly."

"And he is the only person who has visited your mistress?"

"Well," replied the girl, hesitating, "he is the only one I have seen, but—"

"But what? Now, tell the truth, for all you say is of the utmost importance."

Perhaps this was not exactly the way to put her at her ease; but, as it happened, Bessie had no other desire than to tell the truth, and so she was not so confused as she otherwise might have been, at the sternness of the command.

"I fancy that my mistress had visitors occasionally after I had gone to bed, for one morning, when I came down, I found the end of a cigar in the grate, and two or three nights ago I fancied I heard voices downstairs at about twelve or one o'clock."

"You didn't come down to see if your idea was correct?"

"Oh, no, sir!" Bessie responded, with a glance of some surprise; "it was no business of mine, and I did not think of such a thing."

"Certainly not—quite right; you are evidently a sensible little person, and will be sure to get on in life," nodded Manning approvingly. "Now tell me on what terms your mistress and this visitor appeared?"

"On what terms, sir?" she repeated, as if the question puzzled her.

"Yes—yes. Were they friendly or otherwise?"

"Oh, friendly, I should think."

"Affectionate?"

"Do you mean did they kiss one another?"

"Well, yes; if you like to put it in that way."

"I never see them kissing, but then," added Bessie, shrewdly, "they wouldn't do it before me, if they did it at all. Would they, sir?"

Despite his professional anxiety, the constable could hardly refrain from smiling.

"Perhaps not. But from your observation, you would think they were at least friends?"

"Yes, yes," she repeated, half doubtfully, "but—"

"But what?"

"Well, on the night when I told you I heard, or thought I heard voices, it seemed to me as if the voices were quarrelling."

"What night was that?"

"The night before last."

"Did you hear anything that was said?"

"No, not a word, and I should not have heard the voices—for the walls are very thick—if they had not been raised."

The constable was silent for a few minutes, biting the end of his pencil, while he thought over what he had just elicited. Of course, his suspicions immediately fastened on the visitor of the preceding day—indeed, he seemed the only person it was possible to suspect of having committed the crime."

The point now was to find out his name, and then proceed to where he lived, and arrest him—unless, indeed, he had made the most of his few hours' start, and gone beyond the reach of immediate arrest.

He addressed a few more questions to the girl, but found she had told absolutely all she knew; and then, having locked the room where the dead body was lying, he got on his horse and rode to the nearest station—which was Wyndhamstowe.

Here he interrogated the porters as to what passengers had got out the preceding day; and as the station was a very small one, and few trains stopped there, it was not difficult to obtain the information he sought.

"The young man I am speaking of would probably arrive by the six thirty-five train," he said, basing his calculations on the fact that Bessie had seen no one with her mistress when she took in her tea at five o'clock.

"By the six thirty-five," repeated one of the porters whom he was addressing; "then I remember seeing him quite well, for he was the only passenger we had by that train. A tall, darkish young feller, with a moustache. Why, I've seen him lots of times, and I ought to know his name, only my memory's so bad. It's the same young feller as was doing something to the Abbey not long ago, and folks did say as him and Miss Marjorie was sweet on one another."

"Really?" exclaimed Manning, pricking up his ears. "You are sure it was the same?"

"Sure and certain, and by token of it, I says to Jim there, 'Jim,' says I, 'that young chap looks as if he had been leading a queer sort of life since he's been in London, for I never see a man so changed in such a short time,' says I. Didn't I, Jim?"

"You did, Bill," returned the person addressed, scratching his head, solemnly. "Them was your very words."

"So the young man looked ill, did he?"

"Not so much ill as pale and drawn, and wretched. He was as glum as glum, too, and he used to be quite different—had a 'good-day' or nod for everybody—hadn't he, Jim?"

"He had so, Bill," was the rejoinder.

"And yesterday, when I touched my hat to him, he hadn't so much as a nod for me—in fact, I don't think he even saw me, and he hurried off from the station as if he was going to catch a train, instead of his having just left one. Isn't that so Jim?"

"It are, Bill."

"Now," said Manning, congratulating

himself on the ease with which these discoveries had been made, "did this young man go back last night?"

"No, he didn't," answered the more loquacious of the two porters. "There was only one up-train at eight-fifty, and there wasn't a single soul from here got into that."

"You are certain of this?"

"I'll take my dying davy of it."

"And can't you remember the young man's name? Come, try, and if you do, here's a drink for both of you."

But although they tried hard it was without success.

"The fact is," explained Bill, "we don't take much notice of people's names; but if you go to the Squire, he'll tell you in a minute."

Manning accepted the suggestion, and immediately rode on to the Abbey, where he asked to see the Squire, and was conducted into the library, where the master of the house, and Geoffrey Wyndham were sitting, the latter the only composed one of the trio.

"Well, Manning," said the Squire, recognising the constable; "I hope you have come to ask me to grant you a warrant for the author of that ghastly crime."

"You are not far from the mark, sir," respectfully returned Manning, "but my first purpose is to ask you the name of the gentleman who was down here—an architect, I think the porter said he was—a young, tall, dark, rather good-looking man, with a dark moustache?"

"Good heaven's! man, you must mean Roy Fraser!" exclaimed the Squire, interrupting him. "But what has he to do with this affair?"

"Roy Fraser!" repeated the constable, without staying to answer the Squire's question. "Then he must be the owner of this revolver which I found in the murdered woman's house, for the initials are the same, 'R. F.'"

He produced the revolver from his pocket, and handed it to the Squire for examination. Yes, sure enough, there were the initials, and as he handed it back great drops of perspiration stood on the Squire's brow.

In the excitement of the moment no one noticed Marjorie, who had risen from her seat, and now stood in the shadow of the curtains, a pale and trembling witness of the scene.

"The initials are the same," the Squire said, in a distressed voice, "but it must be merely a strange coincidence. It is impossible that Roy Fraser can have anything to do with this affair."

"He was acquainted with the murdered woman, and used to visit at her house."

"Yes—that is true."

"Oh!" said Manning. "Then you knew they were friends, sir?"

"I knew they were acquaintances, because I had once seen him leaving the lodge, and talking to the poor creature."

"When was that?"

The Squire paused to consider, and Geoffrey Wyndham, who had hitherto been silent, came to his aid.

"It was three days ago, I believe, that you mentioned the circumstance. This is Friday, then it was on Tuesday."

"Yes," acquiesced the Squire, "I remember now; it was on Tuesday morning."

"He was there again last night; of that we have ample proof," went on Manning, who thought he saw his way clearer every moment. "And when the servant, Bessie Webber, left the house, he was in it. That, taken in conjunction with the fact of the pistol being found there, and his previous visit, seems to me sufficient evidence on which to ask you to grant a warrant for the young gentleman's arrest."

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will be a bumper pennyworth.

The words roused Marjorie from the almost stupefied lethargy into which she had been thrown by the production of the pistol, and she started forward—bright, erect, and fearless.

"What!" she cried out, in clear, ringing tones. "Do you mean that you actually accuse Roy Fraser of this murder? I tell you, then, that the accusation is false—that you never in your life made a greater mistake than to suppose it possible for him to have committed such a crime! He is incapable of it—as incapable as I am myself!"

The constable hesitated, and looked uncomfortable. He was evidently impressed by her earnestness.

"Yes," added the Squire, "my daughter is right. From what I know I am convinced that he is innocent—perfectly innocent. He is a man of principle, and unblemished honour."

"Only," put in Geoffrey, with the slightest possible satire in his voice, "we all know that both principle and honour often give way before a sudden, overwhelming temptation, and I don't suppose Mr. Fraser is stronger in that respect than his fellow men."

Marjorie turned upon him with flashing scorn in her beautiful eyes.

"Your opinion in this instance, sir, must be taken for what it is worth. Your comprehension of a gentleman's character must necessarily be limited."

He flashed crimson up to the brow, and bit his lip till it bled under his moustache.

"I do not know why you should insult me thus," he murmured, reproachfully; and the squire, who looked thoroughly uncomfortable, added,—

"No, Marjorie—there was certainly no occasion for that remark. You owe Geoffrey an apology."

"I am afraid I shall have to remain in his debt, then," said the girl, quietly. "The truth is, I know, often humiliating, but I shall not ask pardon for uttering it."

In the excitement of hearing him accused she had forgotten Roy's behaviour to her, and only remembered her love, and her former belief in the nobility of his character, and the goodness of his heart; and even when the recollection of the mercenary way in which he had behaved came back to her, it did not prevent her from feeling assured that he was utterly incapable of such a crime as that of which he was accused.

The constable had remained an unmoved spectator of this little family squabble, but now he thought it time to interfere, for every moment that passed gave the murderer a better opportunity of escape, and Manning was determined he should not slip through his hands if he could possibly help it.

"Mr. Fraser will have every chance of proving his innocence afterwards," he observed, "but there is a certain amount of evidence against him; and so, squire, I must ask you to sign the warrant."

"Surely—surely, father, you will do no such thing!" exclaimed Marjorie, putting her hand on her father's shoulder.

"It is certainly very much against my inclination," murmured the squire, in perplexity.

"Well, sir, you must make up your mind soon," said Manning, with some impatience. "Because I don't want to lose time, and if you refuse to grant the warrant, I must go to another county magistrate. It does not seem the right thing to let personal friendship interfere with justice."

The squire flushed angrily, and his first impulse was to order the man from the room; but second thoughts told him there was a certain amount of truth in the

remark, and before he could say anything Geoffrey again interposed.

"What Manning says is quite right, and your refusal to sign the warrant will not help Fraser in the long run, for if you don't sign it someone else will, and your refusal may be put down to wrong motives. In any case, Fraser will have to give an explanation of his presence at the Lodge, and, in my opinion, the sooner the better."

"Then you advise me to issue the warrant?"

"Yes! And I am sure, when the matter is explained to him, Fraser will acquit you of an unfriendly intention. You are but performing your duty as a magistrate, remember."

Marjorie said nothing, because she felt at this juncture her interference could be productive of no good. Besides, as Geoffrey remarked, Roy would have to explain his visits to the cottage, and the sooner he was given an opportunity for doing so the sooner would this dark suspicion be removed from his name.

Thus pressed, the Squire yielded, and signed a warrant for the apprehension of Roy Fraser on the charge of murdering Elizabeth Fanning!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ERMENTRUDE went out of the room while the doctor examined Sir Travice, and waited in her own boudoir until her mother should come in and give her the medical verdict.

How slowly the time passed, ticked away in seconds by the pretty little cuckoo clock—one of the presents Sir Travice had bought her on their last Swiss tour. She walked up and down the room in a fever of impatience, and if her heart could have been read, no hope would have been found there for the Baronet's recovery.

It is true, that while he lived she would be rich, and surrounded by every luxury, but this was not enough for her wilful and imperious disposition. She wanted to feel herself undisputed mistress of his wealth, and of her own actions; she hated restraint in any shape or form, and although Sir Travice had been as kind to her as if she were his own daughter, she was, nevertheless, in wholesome dread of his displeasure; and she felt, too, that if he discovered her unworthiness, or that she had tricked him in any way, he would cast her off without compunction.

But if this accident proved fatal what a destiny would be hers! Golden, indeed, and full of life, colour and happiness!

A few months of mourning, and then a re-appearance at Court and in society—not as the prospective heiress of Sir Travice Leigh, but as a beautiful belle, already rich enough to have her own way in everything.

Of course her mother would try to control her, but Ermentrude smiled as she thought of her mother, for she had not the least intention of allowing that lady to play an important part in her future life, although she had plotted and schemed so successfully for her welfare.

No, she would make her mother an allowance, and they would live together so long as Mrs. Seymour made no attempt to thwart her inclinations; but directly she became troublesome—why, then she must go!

In the midst of these filial reflections, the door opened, and the subject of them came in.

"Well?" said Ermentrude, eagerly.

"He will recover."

The girl turned away, and seated herself in the window recess without speaking.

Her mother watched her curiously.

"You had hoped otherwise!" She said, presently, with a faint sneer curving her lips.

She was devotedly attached to her daughter, from the mere fact that she was her daughter; but she was a student of human nature, and she fancied she had gauged Ermentrude's character to its lowest depths—more than this, she liked to display her knowledge.

"You judge me by yourself," answered the girl, stung by the tone as much as the words.

Mrs. Seymour shrugged her shoulders.

"Well," she observed, calmly; "of course it would have simplified matters very considerably if he had died. And Sir Travice is getting an old man now. For my part, I can't see any particular advantage in living the proverbial threescore years and ten. Somebody says life declines at thirty-five, and certainly after fifty it becomes decidedly uninteresting, and after sixty, a bore. Still, we must bow to fate when we cannot control it."

And with this philosophical remark she left the room and went into the corridor, where she was met by Wise.

Any surprise that she might otherwise have felt at seeing him there was negated by the reflection that the whole house was at sixes and sevens, on account of Sir Travice's accident.

"Ah! Wise," she said graciously, for she made it a point to be invariably polite to her inferiors, and this made it all the stranger that the servants did not any of them like her. "Have you heard the good news given by the doctor?"

"Yes, madam. I took the liberty of stopping him to ask what he thought of Sir Travice's condition."

"And he told you he thought the patient would be convalescent in a week or fortnight?"

"He did—thank Heaven!" said the detective, more warmly than he usually permitted himself to speak. Then he opened his pocket-book and drew from it the bit of lace he had so carefully preserved. "I think this belongs to you, Mrs. Seymour."

She took it in some surprise, and then burst into a laugh. The detective's serious manner seemed so utterly at variance with the tiny torn scrap.

"Yes," she said with perfect freedom, "I think this must be a bit out of one of my lace flounces, but I did not know I had torn it. I suppose the hole was so small that it escaped my notice, and yet, I was looking at the flounce this very morning. Where did you find this morsel?"

"In the plantation."

"In the plantation!" she repeated, and her voice sounded genuinely astonished. "But I had not been in the plantation for weeks!"

"You were not there last night?"

"Certainly not!" very promptly. "I had toothache last night, and went to bed early."

Wise was silent—at a loss in fact. Her manner was so entirely free from embarrassment, so utterly frank and candid, that he came to the conclusion she was really speaking the truth.

In that case it must have been some one else whom he saw last night.

"Perhaps it was Miss Seymour who left the bit on the bush," he said, presently.

"Very likely," composedly returned the lady, "for I gave her a flounce exactly similar to mine, and I know she often goes for walks in the plantation. Still," she added, as the idea struck her, "she does not go there in evening dress. It is strange; I will speak to her about it."

But this was exactly what the detective did not wish her to do, and her declaration put him in a dilemma—from which, however, his quick wit soon extricated him.

"I think perhaps it would be better to

keep silence, Mrs. Seymour," he said, lowering his voice, "and I will tell you my reason for thinking so. Do you know that your daughter is a somnambulist?"

"What?" exclaimed the lady, starting back in the most unaffected astonishment.

"A somnambulist," repeated the detective, with conviction. "You have heard the servants complain of having seen a ghost?"

"Yes, but what has that to do with the matter?"

"Everything; for what they have mistaken for a ghost is none other than Miss Ementrade walking in her sleep!"

"Nonsense!"

"It is the fact—at least, to the best of my belief."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because I have seen the young lady when she has been in a state of somnambulism."

"Seen her face?"

"Yes," declared Wise, unblushingly.

"And you have judged from her expression that she must be asleep?"

Again the detective replied in the affirmative, and Mrs. Seymour remained for a few minutes lost in thought. The communication certainly took her by surprise, but she saw no reason to doubt Wise's veracity, for what object could he have in telling a lie?

"When have you seen her?" she asked, after a lengthened pause.

"I saw her last night, and I have also seen her on previous occasions, but I have taken no steps to awaken her, for as you know, it is dangerous."

Mrs. Seymour nodded.

"Why have you not told me this before?" she queried.

"In the first place, it was no business of mine, and in the second, I thought that most probably you were aware of the fact. Last night, however, when I saw Miss Seymour in the plantation, it struck me that you might possibly know nothing about it, and so it was my duty to tell you. I hope you do not think me presuming, madam?"

"On the contrary, I am much obliged to you, and quite agree with you that it is a matter which is best kept to ourselves."

"I am glad. If," said the detective, very respectfully, "I might make so bold as to offer advice. I should say, keep it secret even from the young lady herself until you have yourself seen her in this state."

"But how am I to see her? I cannot keep watch night after night."

"No, but I will do so."

"What, sit up all night long for an indefinite period?"

"There is no necessity for that," answered Wise, with a smile. "From what I have heard and read of cases of somnambulism, I believe there is a certain regularity about them—that the subject usually walks somewhere about the same time, and I have never seen Miss Seymour, or heard of her being seen, later than one o'clock. I will, if you like, undertake to sit up until that time, and when I do see her I will find a way of letting you know, so as to satisfy you. Perhaps she may not do it for days—weeks even."

Mrs. Seymour, puzzled and ill at ease concerning this revelation, assented mechanically, and then returned to the baronet's room while Wise slowly descended the stairs, pondering deeply the while.

Matters were coming to a crisis, and he foresaw that the *dénouement* must be close at hand; it therefore behoved him to prepare to justify the words he had spoken to Sir Travice, or to leave Woodleigh Court with the humiliating consciousness of having failed in his mission.

He met Villari in the hall, and the secretary stopped to speak to him.

"I suppose you've heard that Sir Travice is out of danger," said the detective, pausing too.

"Yes, and I am rejoiced to think that the scoundrel who served him that trick about the horse is baulked of his scheme. By the way," said the Italian, with some anxiety, "I personally am concerned in the discovery of the villain, for as it was I who saddled Pollux I myself am liable to suspicion."

"Yes," returned Wise, very deliberately, and looking him full in the face as he spoke, "I think perhaps you are."

"Still, that I am innocent Sir Travice himself can prove as soon as he is sufficiently recovered, for he will remember that when I brought the horse out of the stable, and saw how fresh he seemed, I asked to be allowed to saddle another one. Besides, between Sir Travice telling me he wanted the horse and my bringing it round, so short a time elapsed that it would have been impossible for me to have painted the one mark in and the other out."

"That would have taken no time, supposing you had the materials ready at hand."

"But you cannot, surely, suspect me?" exclaimed Villari, springing back.

The detective hastened to repair his mistake.

"Certainly not. I was only saying such a thing was possible. In these sort of cases the first idea that suggests itself to us is to search for the motive, and there would assuredly be no motive for you to let harm befall Sir Travice, seeing that he is, in a sense, your benefactor, from whom your income is derived."

"That is true," observed the Italian, gravely, though he winced a little, as if his pride were hurt by the allusion; "and another factor which you have not brought into the matter is, the sincere affection which I entertain for my benefactor."

"Of course—of course."

"Still," went on Villari, "there can be doubt that treachery has been at work, and the thing is to find out the wretch who did it. Have you any suspicion, Mr. Wise?"

"Perhaps I can hardly say I have a suspicion, sir; but I could make a pretty shrewd guess that the person who fired the pistol at Lord St. Croix and the person who tried to get Sir Travice's neck broken are one and the same."

"Really! You surprise me."

Wise shook his head pensively, but refrained from looking at his companion.

"I suppose you are no nearer to finding out who Lord St. Croix's assailant was?"

Again the detective shook his head.

"Well," added Villari, briskly, "to come back to the matter in hand, I should think that your attention ought to be directed to the grooms, for they are the only persons who have easy access to the stables. There is a young fellow, named Jenkins, to whom Sir Travice administered a very severe rebuke the other day about some negligence he had found out. It is possible the man may have taken it to heart and resolved to avenge it. I do not wish actually to accuse Jenkins, but I mention the matter for your guidance, as a little bit of circumstantial evidence which may or may not be important. If Jenkins is the culprit, there can be no doubt that he painted the horses first thing this morning, before he went to Blackminster for Sir Travice—and, by the way, it was the undergroom's place to go to Blackminster, not Jenkins's. They managed the exchange between them, and, viewed by our present knowledge, it looks queer, does it not?"

The detective assented by a nod. He was listening very attentively to all Villari said.

"Of course," pursued the secretary, who

seemed to have given a good deal of thought to the matter, "the paint must have been put on with a brush, and probably the paint itself was in a pot or pots. Now, how would it be for you to search Jenkins's and the other groom's bedrooms? It is possible you might find traces that would help you."

"Dear me!" interrupted Wise, with a start. "You are quite right—you ought to have been a detective yourself, Mr. Villari. I will go at once to the grooms' room, and make a thorough search."

As he spoke he turned away, and went out of the court, through the back door, straight to the stables, above which the grooms' sleeping apartments were situated. There was a quiet smile on his face the while that seemed to betray inward amusement.

"You are clever in your way, Mr. Villari," he was thinking; "but like other clever people, you occasionally overreach yourself. I fancy you have done so in this instance."

Nevertheless, he made a careful search through the bedrooms, and with the result of finding two small tins of white and brown paint, and a couple of brushes hidden away in the back of a cupboard filled with all sorts of old lumber.

As the detective came down with these in his possession, he found—as he expected—Villari waiting for him in the yard.

"Well?"

Wise nodded mysteriously, and when they had got into the house again, said—

"You were quite right, Jenkins is the culprit. I am going into Blackminster now, to see that he makes no effort to escape, as he is very likely to do; though he has had the courage to make the attempt, it is more than probable his bravery will fail him at the last moment—my experience tells me that this is often the case. I really owe my thanks to you, Mr. Villari, for if you had not suggested it I should certainly never have thought of searching the grooms' room."

CHAPTER XXIX.

As soon as St. Croix heard from the doctor that no dangerous result need be feared from Sir Travice's accident, he rode over to Wyndham Abbey, to offer his assistance to the Squire and Marjorie—or, rather, to ask if he could be of assistance, for his inexperience in these matters made him afraid that the help in his power would be very small indeed.

Nevertheless, it would be a friendly action, and he was anxious as well to see Marjorie, whom he was inclined to regard as a sort of connecting link between himself and Irene.

As it happened, he was ushered into her presence, for the Squire and Geoffrey were still consulting together in the library.

She was very pale, and her voice, when she spoke, trembled. It was clear, too, that she had been weeping, for her eyelids were red and swollen, and there were traces of recent tears on her cheek.

"I am afraid you are in trouble," said Harold, sympathetically, as he took her hand. "This terrible tragedy has upset you."

"It is not only that," Marjorie faltered, her nerves too thoroughly unstrung for her to keep up any semblance of self control; "but another trouble has come on the top of it. My father has just signed a warrant for the arrest of the supposed murderer—"

She paused, unable to continue, and St. Croix said quickly,—

"Surely that is a matter for rejoicing? You would not wish for such a villain to be at large?"

"You do not understand me. There is some egregious error in it all, for the man upon whom suspicion has fallen is, I am convinced, perfectly innocent. Indeed, he was a friend of my own—Roy Fraser."

"Roy Fraser!" repeated St. Croix, in astonishment. "You don't mean Roy Fraser, the architect?"

"Yes. Do you know him?"

"We were at Eton together, and though of late years we have rather lost sight of each other, we still continue friends."

"I did not know he ever was at Eton," said Marjorie, slowly, and without raising her eyes as she spoke.

"Yes, and at Oxford as well. Perhaps you don't know his history? It's rather a pathetic one. His father was a man of very good family, who married beneath him, and died about twelve months later—just after Roy was born. The widow was left in very poor circumstances, and her husband's father offered to take the boy, and bring him up as his heir if the mother would promise never to approach him. It was a hard, brutal condition, and first of all the poor woman refused it; then, being destitute and friendless, she seems to have thought she would not be acting rightly by her son if she deprived him of such a chance of wealth, and so she acceded to old Fraser's wish, and Roy was sent to him, and brought up as his heir. It was not until the lad was twenty-one that he learned the truth, and directly he knew his mother was alive he sought her out, although his grandfather threatened him with disinheritance. He paid no attention to the threat, but the old man has carried it out; for from that time to this they have never seen each other, and Roy had himself articulated to an architect, and has since earned his own living and his mother's as well."

Marjorie was silent, but her heart swelled with a sort of pride at this evidence of Roy's nobility of character. It was strange that she should, as it were, entirely overlook his own brutal behaviour to herself, in the distress she felt at his present painful position.

She was rather surprised that he should never have told her his earlier history in the days of their courtship; but when she came to consider, she found that, in reality, their courtship had consisted of two interviews, in the duration of which they had been too much engaged in talking of the future to spare a thought for the past!

"Of course," went on St. Croix, presently, "it is sheer nonsense to accuse Roy Fraser of such a crime. What is the evidence against him?"

And then Marjorie, as clearly as she could, told him of Fraser's visits to the cottage, of his having been seen there the night of the murder, and finally of the finding of the revolver with his initials upon it.

Harold's face grew graver during the recital.

"The evidence is purely circumstantial, and, no doubt, Fraser will be able to explain it away," he observed; "but I am bound to confess that there are sufficient grounds to justify his arrest."

"But you do not believe him guilty?"

"No, certainly not. I will contrive to obtain an interview with him to-morrow, and talk the matter over. No doubt he will be able to give a perfectly satisfactory explanation of his acquaintance with this poor woman."

"Then you will befriend him?" said Marjorie, with an unconcealed anxiety, that gave St. Croix an inkling of her secret.

"On that you may depend," he returned, heartily; "and now, I think I had better be going. I suppose it will do no good for me to see your father?"

"On the contrary," responded Marjorie, with more truth than politeness, "I think matters had better rest as they are for the present."

Thereupon he took leave, marvelling at this strange chapter of accidents which had led to his hearing of his old schoolfellow once more.

His brow continued very grave as he thought over the circumstances surrounding the murder; and if he felt convinced that Roy was not the actual criminal, on the other hand he imagined it very probable that there had been some love affair between the young man and the beautiful foreigner, and supposing this to be the case, Fraser would be still more open to suspicion than he was at present.

Altogether, the case looked cloudy, and St. Croix, who was a man of the world, and pretty clear-sighted, shook his head rather mournfully, as he recalled poor Marjorie's sad face and tear-stained cheeks.

Not a word had been spoken of Irene—not because she had been absent from the Vicount's mind, but because he felt it would be unfair to intrude other troubles on the young girl at this particular moment, when she had so many of her own.

"A letter for you, if you please, my lord," his valet said, when he entered his dressing-room, and at the same moment presented an envelope on a silver salver.

St. Croix took it, and glanced at it carelessly before opening it. It was forwarded on from his club, and the enclosure made him smile with some surprise.

The address was written in a round, unforned hand, which might have belonged to a child just emerging from pethooks and hangers.

The envelope was dirty, and of the commonest possible description, while a dab of red sealing wax—sealed with a thumb—ornamented the flap, and also the four corners of the back.

Evidently great pains had been taken to render the contents secure from observation, and doubtless the writer had regarded those five great red blotches with sincere admiration, as lending an element of artistic beauty to what would otherwise have been a commonplace epistle.

Rather bewildered, St. Croix took out half a sheet of soiled note paper, on which were traced the following lines,—

"This is to tell you that miss Irene duval as bin taken away from here agen her will, and i believe no good is intended her. She left last nite in a ship called the *anna-maria*, but before she went they giv' her somethin' as sent her to sleep, and it was wile she slep' that they took her away. i can't sign my name becos i shall ketch it if they find out i hav' wrote this, but if you are a fren of hern, u wil be abel to do somethink for her, tel her as i wrote to u, but she is not to tel nobody else."

This effusion—which it is needless to say was from Euphemia—was neither signed nor dated, and St. Croix had to read it over a second time before its meaning broke fully upon him.

No doubt of its genuineness struck him, for in the badly-written, badly-spelt lines, he recognised a certain sincerity and friendliness to Irene, but, alas! the information it gave him was almost too scanty to be acted upon.

Still, it told him that Irene was in danger, and the postmark on the envelope was "London, E." The East of London is a

large district—much too large to give any hopes of his being able to trace the writer. And, indeed, to try and trace her would be merest folly, for, while he was thus occupied, the young girl would be borne far beyond the reach of rescue.

He sat down, and leaned his head on his hand, trying to gain his scattered wits, while he realised the position. That he was, in a measure, bound to do his best to aid the young girl seemed clear, and his engagement to Ermentrude need not be permitted to interfere with such a course, for—he told himself—he looked upon Irene as a sister. Perhaps in this he deceived himself, and if he had said he tried to look upon her as a sister he would have been nearer the mark.

Then the next point to be considered was in what way he could help her. The letter in his hand was written yesterday, and according to it Irene had been taken aboard the night before, so that she must now be well on her way to her destination, and in that case interference would be quite useless.

And yet to sit still and let her drift quietly away to whatever fate her enemies had determined on seemed cruel and heartless. At least he would make an effort on her behalf.

The *Anna-Maria* had evidently started from the London Docks—or such was to be inferred from the expression made use of in the letter—"she left last nite in a ship called *Anna-Maria*—it was wile she slep' that they tuk her away."

His only plan, therefore, was to go to the London Docks, make inquiries concerning the *Anna-Maria*, and in that way learn her destination, and when she started.

Looking at his watch he found that if he made haste he might catch the midday express to town, and then he went quickly in search of Ermentrude—for their present relations made it imperative for him to acquaint her with his movements—and to wish her good-bye.

"I have just had a letter which calls me to London on rather urgent business," Lord St. Croix said—wisely refraining from mentioning the nature of that "business"—"so I intend catching the 1.50 up train. I hope you won't mind this abrupt leave-taking, but I shall be back either to-night or to-morrow."

"Don't hurry on my account," she said, with unflattering graciousness. "I know that business cannot be set aside, and I am not so unreasonable as to wish you to neglect it on my account."

She did not ask him any questions, and it seemed to St. Croix that there was a shade of relief in her manner as she bade him farewell.

He was puzzled, and hardly pleased—for although he knew she did not really love him, he had quite enough of a man's vanity to feel wounded at her unconcealed indifference to his absence.

He shrugged his shoulders as he left her.

"We shall be the very type of a fashionable couple," he said to himself, with a smile, half sad, half cynical. "We shall see each other at dinner, and go into society together in the evening, and beyond that—strangers! How different it would have if only—"

But he did not pursue these musings, for they were dangerous, and he knew it. Still, in spite of his efforts, Irene's face would come before him as he was borne swiftly along, through the sunlit fields, and past pleasant homes, and well-timbered parks, where the deer were hiding in bracken that almost concealed them from view.

His love for her, stemmed though it might be by a stern sense of duty, rose ever and

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will consist of thirty-two pages, price **One Penny**, as usual.

anon in his heart, like some strong, swiftly-flowing river, whose flood it is impossible to withstand.

At Paddington he got into a hansom, and drove straight to the docks—a long journey, that seemed to him interminable, and when he at length arrived at his destination he was rather dazed by surroundings that were to him entirely novel.

However, presently he found one of the officials, to whom he applied for information, and his inquiries were crowned with a certain amount of success—more than he could have counted upon, in fact.

Yes, there was a small vessel called the *Anna-Maria*, and she had left the docks the night before last on the ebb tide. She was schooner-rigged, and bound for the port of Melbourne, and the name of her captain was Marlow. To the best of his belief, she carried a cargo of rails, and had little, if any, accommodation for passengers. Knew Jim Marlow very well by sight—fancied he had had a drink with him, but was not sure. As to his character, knew nothing whatever about it—it was not his business to inquire; but if the gentleman had any more questions to ask concerning the *Anna-Maria* it was likely enough he could get them answered by Tom Bowles yonder—the man in the tug that was just making fast over there, for as it happened he had towed the vessel down the river, and had therefore only just left her.

St. Croix thanked him, and stepped hastily to the spot indicated, where the tug had just made fast; and then he paused, for coming up the steps was a woman whom he was not slow to recognize, but whose grimly satisfied face made his heart grow sick.

It was Mrs. Sumner, and from her appearance it was only too evident that the undertaking in which she had been engaged was successful.

(To be continued next week.)

(This story commenced in No. 1089. Back Nos. can be obtained through any newsagent.)

THIRTY YEARS AGO.

Thirty years ago to-day!

My! how the time has slipped away!

I recall your laughing eyes

Matching well the summer skies;

Blushing cheeks and bridal smiles;

And the minister to bless;

I can scarce believe 'tis so—

Thirty years ago!

And I ask, as I look back

O'er the long, time-beaten track,

Would you now, as you did then,

Answer "Yes" and start again?

Knowing all, doth sad regret

Chide the hour when first we met?

Would you, knowing, have said "No."

Thirty years ago?

Mem'ries of those fleeting years

Full of mingled joys and tears;

Tears for one who crossed the bar

Bright to us as Evening's star;

Hearts rejoiced by little hands

Sent from Heaven's golden strands—

These are things we did not know

Thirty years ago.

Love hath burned away our tears,

Sent a rainbow through the years,

So that, looking down the stream,

Like some half-remembered dream,

Cometh back those bygone hours,

Wedding chimes and bridal flowers—

Do you wish you had said "No."

Thirty years ago?

Gleanings

PAINLESS dentistry is merely the art of drawing it mild.

THE new moon is like a giddy young girl—not old enough to show much reflection.

SOME bachelors join the army because they like war—and some married men because they like peace.

A RARE distinction has been achieved by Elmer Pfister, of Arcola, Ill. In one hour he ate two dozen ham sandwiches, and now prides himself on being the ham sandwich champion.

To be acceptable as a soldier in the German army a man must be able to swim. The best swimmers are able to cross a stream of several hundred yards' width even when carrying their clothing, rifle and ammunition.

At Willoughby, on the London Road, about five miles from Ruby, stands the "Four Crosses" Inn. The name is not extraordinary, but its history is curious. Originally it was the "Three Crosses." But Dean Swift once called at the house, and, mistaking his reception by the hostess, he scratched this couplet on the window-pane:—

You have three crosses at your door;
Hang up your wife, and you'll have four.

So the name was changed. The pane is still to be seen, to witness the truth of the story.

BOYS WISHING TO GO TO SEA.—The Committee of the *Arethusa* and *Chichester* training ships, Greenhithe, Kent, state that there are vacancies on board these ships for boys of good character who wish to go to sea. The ages should be between fourteen and sixteen, and applications may be sent to the Secretary, The National Refugee, 164, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, and at which address candidates are seen every morning at 11 o'clock. Forms of application and full particulars will be gladly forwarded to any part of the United Kingdom. All suitable cases are admitted at once without votes.

ACCORDING to a writer in *Munsey's Magazine*, there is not the slightest doubt that the seal will be practically extinct in a few years. Notwithstanding the protective measures, it is decreasing with alarming rapidity. One cause, no doubt, is the pelagic sealing—that is, the taking of seals in the open sea. If we are to believe all that has been written on the subject, the term "pelagic" covers a multitude of crimes. The pelagic sealers kill the animals with guns, spears, or any effective weapon while they are in the water. It is impossible to distinguish bull, cow, and bachelor seals in the water, so these hunters kill the animals first and examine them afterwards.

MANY old English customs have died out, but the annual dressing of the wells is still practised in a few places in the Midlands. One of these is Tislington, an old-world village nestling amongst the Derbyshire hills. There is no record of the origin of the custom. The villagers tell you that it is in commemoration of a great drought which once burnt up the pastures and dried up the rivers, but to the end of the rainless time the five wells at Tislington ran full and clear, and the grateful villagers one day dressed the wells with flowers, and marked it as a holiday for all time. Perhaps the story is not true, but for want of a better one it is accepted, and from time immemorial the wells at Tislington have been florally decorated by successive generations of villagers one day in the year.

THE three expeditions which are to make a simultaneous attack upon the Antarctic continent are rapidly completing their preparations, and are expected to start early in the autumn. The *Discovery*, recently launched in Dundee, will reach the Thames in the course of a few weeks, and will sail, probably in August, with the British Government expedition. The *Discovery* will endeavour to establish a station at Erebus Volcano, in Victoria Land, while the German expedition, co-operating, hopes to gain a footing on the mysterious continent somewhere to the south of Kerguelen Island. Scotland is sending a national expedition, which will deliver its attack from the other side of the Pole.

It is well known that the basis of most hair dyes is nitrate of silver, which often occasions harm. A simple recipe for darkening the hair is as follows: Make a strong decoction of tea and another of sage tea. Combine both preparations and apply freely to the hair, rubbing it in with the fingers. Another simple and harmless hair-dye is to get about two pounds of green walnut shells and crush them by beating them in a mortar or stout earthen vessel. Then cover them with water, to which about ten per cent. of alcohol has been added. Let the shells macerate for from ten days to two weeks. Then draw off the fluid, filter and bottle it. Apply to the hair with a small sponge, and rub the fluid into the roots with the fingers. Before applying this dye the hair should be washed with a solution of sal soda to remove all evidence of grease.

IT CAME AT LAST.—Few letters have remained so long in the keeping of the Post-office as one which has now safely reached its destination after a lapse of twenty-nine years. On Christmas Day, 1871, the document was posted at Swindon, addressed to a young lady who resided in Charnham Street, Hungerford. A day or two ago it was delivered to a lady at Newbury, having occupied a quarter of a century plus four years in transit. The delay was caused by the missive falling behind some woodwork at the Swindon office, where it lay unnoticed until certain alterations in the building brought it to light. It was then sent on to Hungerford, where there happened to be a postman who knew the lady to whom the letter was addressed. Hence the delivery to the rightful owner, in spite of the fact that she had changed her name three times since the envelope was inscribed.

THAT great jam and marmalade maker, Mr. W. P. Hartley, of Aintree, Liverpool, is determined to conquer the South, as he has conquered the North, of England, with his choice preserves, and this he should have no difficulty in doing once he has persuaded the public to try his goods. For the purpose of meeting the increasing demand, and also with the object of extending his business in London and the South, Mr. Hartley has just opened new works in Southwark. The works, which cover two acres of ground, are splendidly equipped, and full use is made of the latest labour-saving machinery. Here, the jam and marmalade will be produced from fresh fruit (nothing being pulped), and filled at once into jars and stacked in the huge warehouses until sold. English fruit is used, grown either on Mr. Hartley's own farms or specially grown for him. The London and Liverpool works together will be capable of producing over 1000 tons of choice preserves weekly, and the supreme object will be, as heretofore, to turn out the purest and best article which the most advanced science and art of preserve-making can command.

Helpful Talks

BY THE EDITOR.

The Editor is pleased to hear from his readers at any time.

All letters must give the name and address of the writers, not for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

I HAVE lately asked my readers to assist me in making THE LONDON READER more widely known, and my thanks are due to many in distant corners of the United Kingdom for their efforts on behalf of their favourite story paper. This week I am asking your help in a very practical way. The commencement of a serial story is always a capital opportunity for securing new readers. *Guy Forrester's Secret* is a remarkably good story, and it is the right moment for every reader to send one shilling and fivepence in stamps, and they will receive by return twelve copies of this week's LONDON READER, carriage paid, and a handsome nickel-plated salt-cellar and spoon, as a present for your trouble in selling the copies of the paper among your friends. You will have no difficulty in disposing of them; indeed, if you mention that the new serial story is by that well-known and brilliant author, Florence Hodgkinson, they will sell like hot cakes.

THE SALT CELLAR AND SPOON is no trumpery toy, but a really useful and serviceable article; fit to adorn the table of the rich as well as those less favored with this world's goods. That you may judge how highly they are valued, I mention that Lady H—, of Kensington, wrote for one, and on receiving it, immediately wrote for another, expressing her pleasure and entire satisfaction with the gift. So lose no time, but send your applications at once, as it is a case of first come first served. Address your letter to the Puzzle Editor, LONDON READER, 50 and 52, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.

ALICE'S ADMIRER.—The young lady is much too young to know her own mind in such matters, and you had better cease from attempting to cultivate her acquaintance for at least two years.

ONE IN TROUBLE.—You cannot sell goods on which you have raised money by bill of sale without the consent of the holder. Whoever bought them under such circumstances would have to give them up.

SINGER.—To strengthen your voice take plenty of exercise in the outer air, and sing as much as possible. Reading aloud is also good for the lungs. Drink milk, and take a wine-glassful of cream every morning before breakfast. The white of an egg beaten up with sugar and eaten is a preventative of huskiness.

DOUBTER.—Presumably it is a sign of awkwardness on the part of either the lady or gentleman. 2. A man may admire and flirt with a pretty girl who is free and forward, but he is not likely to marry such a one. 3. Yes; wait for a couple of years, at least, before being engaged. 4. If a young lady cannot tell whether a young man she knows is in love with her better than anyone, like ourselves, who have never seen him or her, she must be extremely simple.

WEAK HAIR.—The following is stated to be Sir Erasmus Wilson's lotion to prevent the hair falling out:—Eau de Cologne, two ounces; tincture of cantharides, two drachms; oil of lavender or rosemary, of either, ten drops. Apply to the roots of the hair once or twice a day until the hair ceases to fall out. If it has no effect after some considerable time there is probably something wrong with the general health, and the doctor should be called in.

LOVING VERA encloses the picture of a gentleman and asks what I think of the face. It seems the face of a practical, intelligent, prudent man, who has good ideas about business, and a very fair opinion of himself. He will be apt to be kind to his wife, but not indulgent. He will love her almost as well as he loves himself, and he will never let her want any of the necessities of life. That is my idea, judging from the face. Your writing is good. Its indications are of an impulsive, sensitive nature.

MRS. SUMNER.—To secure a position as stewardess, either advertise, or make personal application at the offices of the various steamship companies. The duties of a stewardess are chiefly to wait upon women-passengers and children, especially those who are confined to their cabins by illness; to do any light sewing that may be required on board, and to assist in other ways, as occasion may arise. The necessary qualifications for a stewardess are good health and good temper, a strong constitution, and pleasant manners. The salary varies, some steamship companies paying more than others, and regulating the rate of pay in accordance with the number of passengers carried; the amount is not generally high, but it is usually augmented by the gifts of grateful passengers and other perquisites. An energetic, tactful and thrifty stewardess has very few expenses, and acquires quite a considerable income.

IN TEMPTATION.—Yours is a very sad case. You say you love a married man with all your heart, and that he loves you; that he says he will be kind and good to his wife, but that he can love but you. You say you would rather die than give him up; that life would not be worth living if you did, and yet you feel it your duty to do so, but he will not help you in your struggle to keep him true to his wife. From the bottom of the heart that writes this comes a wish to help you, though the words it is duty to pen seem harsh and cold. For a woman to love another woman's husband means only anguish and dishonour if her love is discovered. Knowing the misery it will cause you, you must be told that to remain near this man will be your ruin and his shame. He has a wife whom he has sworn to love and protect, and as you cannot be his wife, your love for him is all wrong. For your own sake leave him. Tell him if he has a spark of manhood in his heart, or any real love for you, that he will help you to go, as it is a lover's duty to strive for the welfare of the being beloved. As for you, apart from him, put your soul in your work, determine to crush your unholy love from your heart, and though the struggle may be painful, you will conquer yourself and be a far better woman hereafter.

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London
Reader

SPOT COUPON.

July 20th, 1901.

PILLAR BOX.—The first pillar letter-box was erected at the corner of Fleet Street and Farringdon Street in March, 1855.

WOULD BE ACTRESS.—The present usually thrown on the stage in token of admiration of the genius of the actress is a bouquet of flowers as choice as the purse of the giver would allow. Any florist would tell you how they are made up.

A FAITHFUL READER.—(1) In the language of flowers, a White Camelia, when offered to a lady and accepted, signifies that you consider her very beautiful. (2) I never heard of any particular meaning attaching to the dropping of a white, or for that matter, any colour handkerchief, in front of a young lady. It may have some sentimental significance, but I am unable to help you. (3) A magnet has a greater attraction at the points than the centre.

MARJORIE.—You can have artificial teeth put in without extracting the roots if you like. The dentists often do this, no doubt. It is better though to have the teeth pulled, and have what the dentists call "clean gums." No more bother with decaying roots. If you are afraid to take gas, cocaine applied to the gums will deaden the pain, and a good drink of brandy or dose of morphine will stimulate you so you will feel hardly any pain. Make up your mind to bear it, and half the battle is won.

MILDRED.—A great many recipes are given for making the hands white, but the simplest and most efficacious is to keep them always thoroughly clean and covered as much as possible with gloves or mittens. Wash in tepid water, into which a tablespoonful of oatmeal has been put, and at night anoint them with glycerine. Above all, keep them out of very hot water. 2. Helena is pronounced with the accent on the first syllable, not as if written Heelena. Penelope is pronounced as if written "Pennelopy."

HELENA.—According to the superstition associated with it, the fiery garnet is the stone of January, and it ensures constancy and fidelity in every sort of engagement. To February belongs the amethyst, and he who is born in that month should wear the purple stone as a preservative against violent passions and dissipation to which fate will tempt him. The light blue turquoise is the gem of December, assuring prosperity in love. 2. The stone of misfortune, but also of hope, is the opal. It belongs to October.

HERBERT'S WIFE.—A carpet that does not need taking up can be wonderfully freshened by first sweeping it very thoroughly, and then going over it with a cloth wrung frequently out of clear water, to which has been added a little ammonia. A thorough method of cleaning a carpet, and one which restores its color to a marked degree, is to first take it up and have it thoroughly beaten. Then secure it to a floor with strong tacks at the corners, and scrub it with a new broom dipped into a pail of water, with which has been mixed oxgall, in the proportion of a pint to three-gallons of soft water.

MADGE.—You can gain flesh by warm bathing with friction afterwards, eating farinaceous food—bread, beans, potatoes, &c., drinking milk instead of coffee, and quitting the use of tobacco, if you are a slave to that weed. It is an enemy to flesh and fine colour. If the tartar on your teeth is of long standing it will have to be removed by a dentist; if not, try powdered charcoal. It would be a little hasty to ask the young lady you have just been introduced to to allow you to escort her to church unless she had known of you through mutual friends. Don't be in a hurry to revenge yourself on the woman you love. The best form of revenge is not to seem to care for what you heard, and to treat her with friendly courtesy when you meet her.

COLD HEART.—If the lady is under age you cannot sue her for breach of promise, and if she is over age you would only make yourself ridiculous by doing so; neither can you claim the presents back unless you can prove that you gave them in express consideration of marriage. The young lady does not seem to know her own mind; perhaps she will find she does care for you if you treat her coldly, and then possibly you will be able to make it up again. It is only a lover's quarrel, which a celebrated poet tells us is a renewal of love.

ARTIST'S MODEL.—The proportions of a beautiful model are thus given: The height should be exactly equal to the distance between the tips of the middle fingers of either hand when the arms are extended; ten times the length of the hand, or seven and a half times the length of the foot, or five times the diameter of the chest, from one armpit to the other, should also each give the height of the whole body. The distance from the hips to the feet should be quite or nearly the same as from that point to the crown of the head. The knee should be precisely midway between the same point and the bottom of the heel. The distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger should be the same as from the elbow to the middle of the breast. From the top of the head to the level of the chin should be the same as from the level of the chin to that of the armpits, and from the heel to the toe.

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